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ATARI STUSER

May 1994
Issue 100

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10

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with your
home movies*

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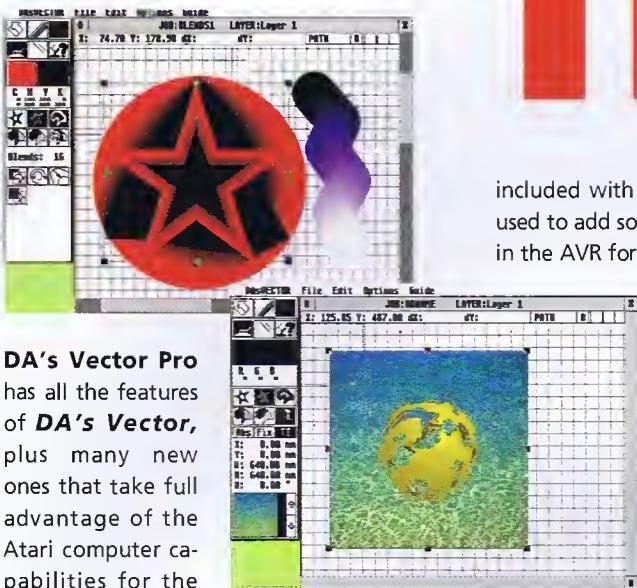
- FRANKFURT MUSIC SHOW NEWS
- COLOUR SCANNERS
- BREAKTHRU 2
- TRUE IMAGE
- PAPYRUS



9 770952 300060

INSIDE ST ACTION : *Lotus Trilogy, Premier Manager 2, Police Quest and much more*

CGS ComputerBild are pleased to announce the arrival of DA's Vector Pro.



DA's Vector Pro has all the features of **DA's Vector**, plus many new ones that take full advantage of the Atari computer capabilities for the first time.

Gradient fills. Now you can create custom shading for your vector designs. Both linear and radial shading is possible, and takes up very little memory as the gradients are part of the object, not multi-copies.

Blends. This innovative feature enables you to combine several objects and automatically creates shading between them. It can also "morph" between two different shapes.

Combine pixel and vector graphics. Many enhancements have been made to the program's picture fill section. Any white area can be defined as transparent. Picture fills may be rotated. Monochrome pictures can be used as fills, and re-coloured.

Multi-copier. As well as importing pictures, whole animation sequences can be loaded into the animator and mixed with vector graphics. The animation can be rendered with **InShape** or digitised from video using **DA's Picture** (Matrix version).

Camera. Another major addition to the animator is the ability to set up camera paths, zoom, and distortions. Each layer of an animation can have its own camera.

Filters. The filters can be used in many ways; fades, tints, wipes, ghosting. Any object or picture can be used as a filter. Each layer can have a different filter. Filters can be used as masks for video genlocking.

Animation editing. **DA's Vector Pro** can cut, copy, move and loop any section of an animation.

Movie compiler. This compiler program is

They're

included with the main Program and can be used to add soundtracks to your films. Samples in the AVR format can be loaded and synchronised to film segments. All frequencies are supported, including that of the Falcon.

As well as adding sounds you can also load single frames to create presentations and slide-shows, and mix single frames with animated sequences.

DA's Picture

DA's Picture has many features not seen in any other art/ image processing packages. All the tools, modules and palettes can be moved to where they suit you, so there's no menu permanently taking up space. Virtual memory management means large pictures can be edited without massive quantities of RAM.

Dual mouse control. Each mouse button can be assigned a different tool or colour.

Tools. Pencil, marker, airbrush, water-colour, smear, dither, stamp (create & save custom brushes)

Filters. Erode, blur, sharpen, invert, contour, to name but a few. **DA's Picture** allows user defined filters to be loaded and saved.

Masks. Both 1 bit and 8 bit masks can be used. It is also possible to import greyscale pictures as masks.

Palette. User palettes may be defined and saved. The "colour pick" tool makes grabbing colours from pictures easy.

Clipboard. Cut up your images and paste them in numerous ways. The clipboard menu allows you to define many parameters before pasting an image e.g. any degree of transparency, colour saturation, negative, tinted, scaled.

Zoom. The magnify tool allows super fast zooming in and out. Simply aim the mouse

and click until you reach the required zoom level, (13 levels). Zoom out to one 17th of original size.

Vector Module. This module is used to import or draw vector graphics. You can use various tools on vector paths, for example airbrush, marker, stamp.

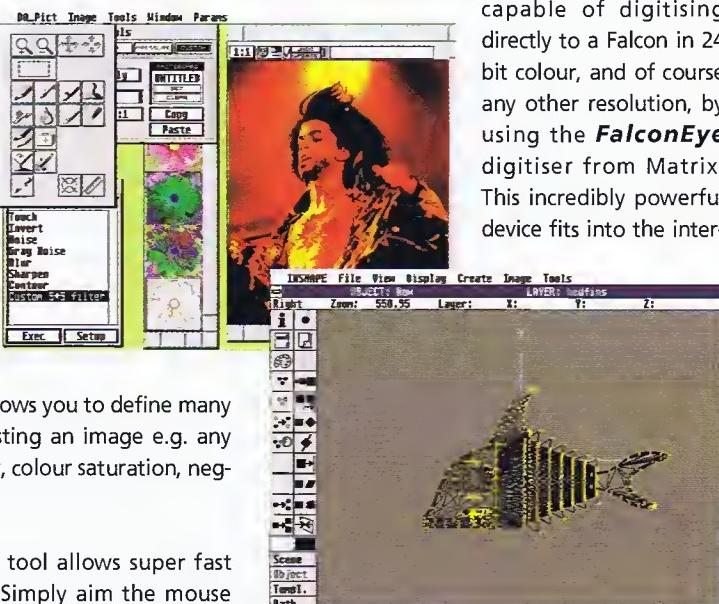
Gradient creator. Design gradient fills for use as backgrounds, masks etc. Gradients can be dithered to obtain many different effects.

Colour gradation. This module allows images to be re-coloured by adjusting the amount of each colour present in an image. For instance change greys to sepia, or correct the colours in a scanned or digitised picture. These settings can be saved for further use.

Print. **DA's Picture** can output directly to HP 550/LaserJet II, III, IV, Atari SLM, Canon CLC, Star NL-10 and NEC P6/7. You may also print to disk as IMG or TIFF/TIC/TIH.

Import/Export. The TIFF formats supported by all of Digital Arts' software can be loaded and saved directly. It is also possible to save compressed Tiffs, and in the Intel (P.C.) format. Many other image formats can be converted with **DA's Converter**, included with the software.

Options. **DA's Picture** is a modular program, this means peripherals such as scanners and Digitisers can be used without leaving the program. The first module (available now) is capable of digitising directly to a Falcon in 24 bit colour, and of course any other resolution, by using the **FalconEye** digitiser from Matrix. This incredibly powerful device fits into the inter-



here . . .

nal expansion slot and can be connected to a video recorder or camcorder. It can grab in real-time (true colour), and can also produce high quality full screens in mere seconds. Grabbed sequences can be loaded directly into **DA's Vector Pro**, and mixed with stills and vector graphics. Call us for full details of the Matrix technical specifications.

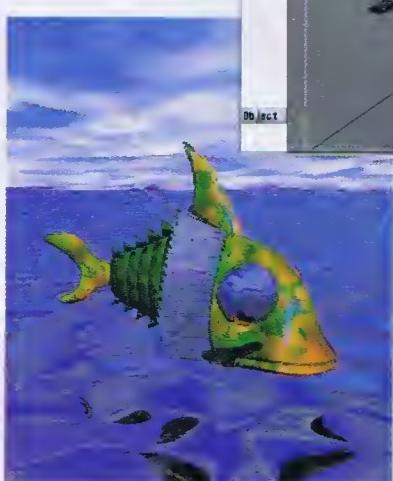
InShape

InShape is a fully integrated 3D modelling and ray-tracing package that allows you to construct objects, put them into scenes and render single frames and animations. **InShape** requires either a TT or Falcon with maths co-processor.

Modeller. The Modeller is the core of **InShape** and allows highly accurate positioning and scaling of objects (.0001mm). Complex objects can be built from components over 16 layers, or objects can be imported from *.3D2 files.

Objects can be built from the large range of materials included, you may also define and save your own materials. Materials can be a wide range of surface patterns e.g. marble, wood, spots, stripes, tiles, random, turbulent. Image mapping can be used to wrap graphics around 3D models in several different ways. Bump maps are available for extra surface detail. Choose from bumps, dents, waves, tiles, pyramids, wrinkles.

The scene editor is used to illuminate and position objects ready for rendering. Scenes can be made



to scale and illuminated in many different ways. Position the camera anywhere in the 3D world and record single frames or animations at any size between 80*80 and 1046*1046.



Formerly **Didot Professional**, this program is available in two versions; black and white, and colour design. **DA's Layout CD** is a full colour DTP system for the Atari. It is easy to learn yet immensely powerful. The interface has been fine tuned for speed and integration between text and graphics.

Text. **DA's Layout** has a built in text editor, so you don't have to continually swap programs, and search for files.

Zoom. A unique zoom method means no more endless redraws as you scroll a page. Just set two zoom levels and switch between them.

Fonts. Both Calamus and Postscript Type 1 fonts may be imported. The font management system allows fonts to be grouped and saved in libraries. The font editor enables you to make your own fonts and change existing ones.

Vector Graphics. **DA's Vector** owners can import objects that incorporate pictures and gradient fills. Other formats supported are CVG, and GEM Metafile. Once imported, objects can be edited,

with the vector editor, you can also make objects from scratch. Also included is a bezier tracer for converting pixel graphics. Objects may be saved in libraries that are automatically loaded with your document.

Graphic text. Text can be manipulated like an object: squash, stretch, 3D distort, and then exported.

Pictures. These can be in the TIFF or IMG format. Halftone pictures can be re-coloured. For image editing **DA's Repro** is included.

Print. All contemporary printers are supported. For exporting to Imagesetters several different formats may be used, including different Postscript types. There are even fax drivers.

Style and format Macros are stored in libraries and can easily be edited and assigned keyboard shortcuts.

Epson Scanners. We are approved agents for the Epson GT range of scanners, and can supply **GT Look II** driver software with each scanner purchase. **GT Look II** allows you to define size, magnification, dithering, screening method, colour adjustment, brightness and sharpness. For extra high resolution images **GT Look II** can scan direct to disk. **GT Look II** saves files in the formats used by all of the Digital Arts software. We can supply full technical specifications for the Epson scanners and provide demonstrations upon request.

Tabby Graphics Tablet. **Tabby** makes drawing freehand directly to the screen an easy task. Simply plug the hardware into the serial port,

install **Tabby** program and it's ready for use. Ask for details on the forthcoming **Quill**, a super fast hand writing capture program or accessory that translates every flick of your pen into flawless curves, with a choice of nibs. **Quill** is ideal for signatures, hand lettering, calligraphy, tracing, cartoons and sketches.

Price List

DA's Vector	£149.00
DA's Vector Pro	£249.00
Dream Team B/W	£299.00
Dream Team CD	£499.00
DA's Picture	£149.00
InShape Intro	£149.00
InShape Intro With FPU	£199.00
Tabby Graphics Tablet	£49.95
Quill	£29.99

All prices quoted are inclusive of VAT. Please allow £5.00 for postage within the UK. For further information and to place your order, please phone us on: 081 679 7307,



or write to:
CGS ComputerBild,
231 Northborough Road,
Norbury, London,
SW16 4TU.

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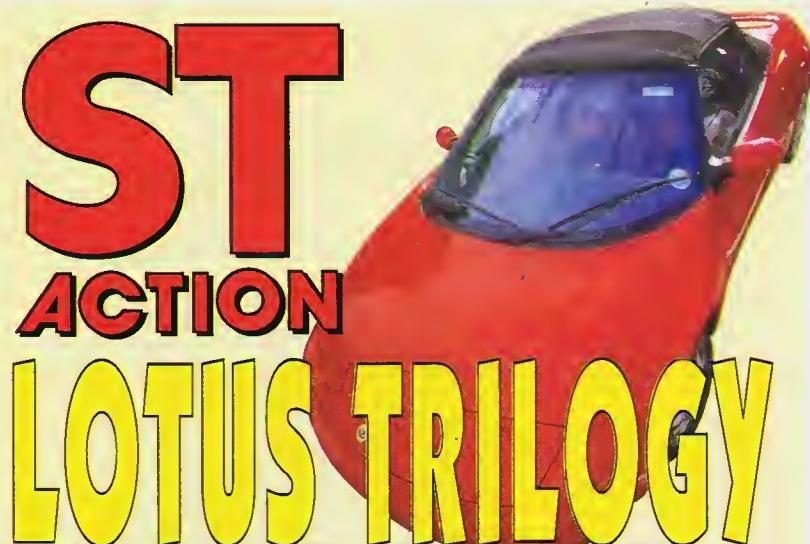
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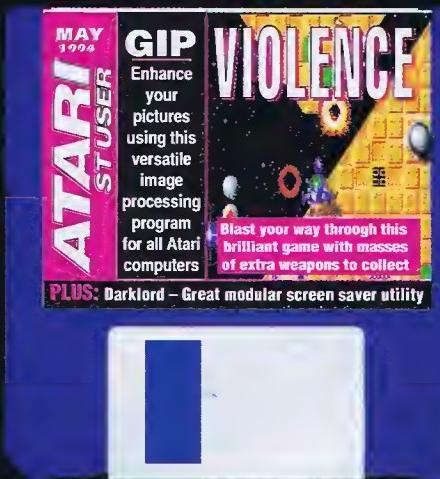
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The CoverDisk



Enhance and touch up pictures using the excellent GIP image processing package, or play Violence, a thrilling shoot-'em-up with great graphics and gameplay

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- **Darklord** - This versatile and modular screen saver utility will prevent damage to your valuable monitor

- **Picswitch** - Convert numerous and varied picture formats on both the ST and other computers with this useful program

And more besides...

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Ladbroke Computing



33 Ormskirk Rd,
Preston, Lancs,
PR1 2QP

Ladbroke Computing International are one of the longest established home computer dealers in the U.K. We have developed an extensive customer service policy which involves testing of all hardware prior to despatch to ensure that goods arrive in working order, offering free advice and support over the phone and keeping customers informed. Although our prices are not always the cheapest we do endeavour to offer consistently good service and backup.

All prices are correct at copy date 23/3/94 (while stocks last), and are subject to change without prior notice. All prices include VAT but exclude delivery.

How to Pay

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ST Switch Box £19.99
Falcon VGA adaptor £9.99

The Microvitec 1438 is a multisync monitor compatible with both the Atari ST and the Falcon. Utilising the ST switch box it is possible to display all three ST resolutions on the same monitor. Also compatible with screen blaster for the FALCON.

"Microvitec 1440... Highly recommended" -Atari ST User

Dataview .28 SVGA £239.99
This high quality SVGA colour monitor comes complete with Falcon adaptor. The .28 dot pitch gives the highest quality picture (Falcon will only display 256 colours in high resolutions).

ST-SVGA adaptor £19.99
Falcon-Composite £9.99
Falcon Scart £13.99
Falcon-ST Mon adaptor £9.99
SCART STE cable £9.99
SCART STFM cable £9.99

Scart TV

(Requires SCART Lead)

Samsung C13352X £179.99
The Samsung C13352X is a 14" SCART input TV with remote control and on-screen displays.

Modems
2400 Baud Voyager £69.99
2400 baud pocket modem, MNP 2-4 error correction, MNP5 data compression
14400 Baud Pegasus Fax Modem £159.99

14400 Baud Modem, Auto Dial, Auto answer, Lifetime limited warranty, MNP 2-4 error correction, MNP 5 data compression, S/R Class 1 & Class 2 commands, Group 3 S/R fax modem (compatible with Straight FAX™)

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"Data Pulse is astonishingly fast" -
Andrew Wright, ST User

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Games support boost for Jaguar

JAGUAR games development has been stepped up with the announcement from Atari that another 48 games makers have pledged their support this year.

It brings to almost 90 the number of companies already attracted to the revolutionary 64-bit system, with the latest partners including Populous developer Bullfrog Productions.

Among the others are Dragon's Lair publisher ReadySoft Incorporated, and Mortal Kombat developer Sculptured Software.

"We are pleased the industry's most innova-



Tramiel:
Offering
creative and
commercial
opportunities

by John Butters

tive, successful software companies continue to join the Jaguar team," said Atari president Sam Tramiel.

"Jaguar is the world's most powerful multi-media video game system. Consequently, this platform offers leading developers and publishers unprecedented creative and commercial opportunities."

Meanwhile, Atari hope that 100,000 of the consoles will be available in Britain between June and December, with full availability during the period in the United States.

The machine will be distributed to the trade through two distributors and sold to end users by independent computer and video games dealers.

A general downturn in the 16-bit console market makes Atari believe one million Europeans will next year turn to the advanced gaming technology offered by the Jaguar.



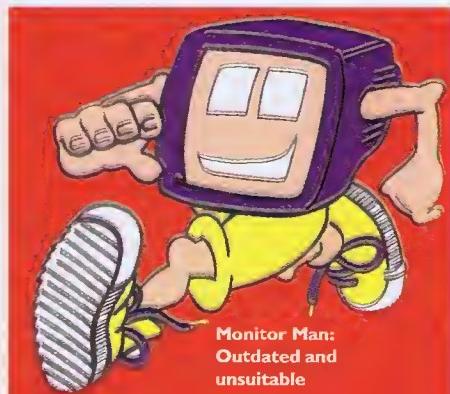
Sportster: Fax and modem for just £99

Fax modem for under £100

COMMUNICATIONS prices have fallen further, with US Robotics (0753 811180) now cutting the price of their Sportster 2400 fax modem from £149 to £99.

The move comes as rival manufacturers launch cheap modems, telephone prices continue to fall and just weeks after on-line system CompuServe cut costs for British users.

The Sportster 2,400 is aimed at home and small office users who do not need high data rates. It supports Group III, 9,600 bits per second send and receive fax with 2,400bps data throughput. The modem is BART approved and comes with a five-year warranty.



Monitor Man:
Outdated and
unsuitable

Industry kills Monitor Man

MONITOR Man has been dropped from the games industry's classification artwork just weeks after the body representing Europe's software houses launched the age rating system.

And two games makers will not be following the ELSPA system, which is intended to ease Government and parental concern over the suitability of some software for young children.

Nintendo and Acclaim say that although they agree with the system's objectives, they would like to take a global view on the situation and are looking to the US for an alternative.

Other companies are also believed to be hoping that a replacement comes along, although many are simply relieved that Monitor Man has been removed from boxes.

There was criticism that the character was outdated and newspaper Computer Trade Weekly questioned its suitability for the interactive entertainment industry of the '90s.

"Several members decided that Monitor Man was not appropriate, and as a result the ELSPA logo has been put in its place," said ELSPA chairman Mark Strachan.

"We've been working on this system for a year. It was passed unanimously by members and will go ahead."

He added that while some firms were looking towards worldwide classification he thought such a system would be impractical because of different standards across the world.

British support extends online

ONLINE information giant CompuServe (0800 289378) have announced a range of new services aimed at their 35,000 British members.

The company's product marketing manager Martin Turner, says the first new service - expected within the next few weeks - will feature reviews of films, movies, books and theatres.

A Newswire feature due around the same time will contain news and sport information from around Britain. And the company plan to extend their financial and travel services, although Turner declined to give more details on these improvements.

"We recently launched four travel databases provided by the Automobile Association which are already proving to be very successful," said Turner. "Within the coming months we expect to introduce a number of leading UK-focused news, travel, entertainment and financial products."

Members pay around £6 per month for unlimited access to more than 70 basic services during off-peak hours. There are additional costs for access to other areas and during prime hours.

News briefs

Cheap CD-ROM

LADBROKE Computing (0772 203166) plan to release a sub-£200 CD-ROM drive for all TOS-based Atari computers during the next few weeks.

★ ★ ★

Free entry

ATARI dealer Gasteiner (081-345 6000) are offering 200 *Atari ST User* readers free tickets to their Spotlight '94 computer show due to be held on May 28 and 29.

The event will be at the Novotel Hotel in Hammersmith, London and is expected to be attended by some of the major players in the Atari market.

The first 200 people to call 081-345 6573 and quote reference STUI will receive free entrance.

★ ★ ★

Rombo move

ROMBO, makers of video digitiser Vidi-ST, have moved to 2B Young Square, Brucefield Industrial Estate, Livingston EH54 9BX. The new telephone number is 0506 414631.

★ ★ ★

Offer address

READERS wanting to buy DA Vector from last month's CoverDisk offer should send orders to CGS ComputerBild at their new address.

If you have already sent off but not received the program contact the company at 231 Northborough Road, Norbury, London SW16 4TU. Tel: 081-679 7307.

★ ★ ★

Readers wanted

DO you want the fame of appearing in *Atari ST User*? We would like to interview readers about how they use their Atari computer and the problems they encounter.

We're interested in hearing from you no matter how the machine is employed, whether it be for games playing, word processing or for running a small business.

Write to *Atari ST User*, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

★ ★ ★

On sale

WATCH out for the June issue - on sale at a newsagent near you from May 12.

Silmarils games going cheap

TWO full price role playing games - Ishar and Transarctica - are being offered to *Atari ST User* readers for just £4.99 each. Daze Marketing say the deal is aimed at increasing the profile of Silmarils' software.

"The way we see it, there are people out there who still haven't seen the RPGs that Silmarils make," said company spokesman Cliff Guy. "Once they've seen these two games, we're sure they'll be back for more."

The offer is available direct from Daze at 2 Canfield Place, London NW6 3BT. The firm can be reached on 071-328 2762.



Cliff Guy: Sure buyers will return to Silmarils games

Modems extend Siren range

SIREN Software have added Best Data's Smart One line of modems to their range of products, with prices starting at just £69.99 for a 2,400 baud model. But according to Siren's Simon Cobb, the Smart One 1442FX costing £199 offers the best features and value for money.

It operates at between 1,200 and 14,400 bits per second, can send and receive faxes at 14,400bps and is fax Group III-compatible. The modem comes with communications software, a two-year warranty and beginners' guide. Fax software is available from the firm for an extra £49.99.

"Although a cheaper 2,400 standard modem is available, this is not really cost effective because you run up higher telephone bills," explained Cobb.

Degree starts in games design

STUDENTS will this year be able to take a degree course covering all aspects of computer games design including software engineering, graphics, design and music.

The new course is aimed at encouraging and stimulating the talent that exists in Britain and to make the country one of the leading centres of development for leisure software.

It follows concerns by managers at software houses that games players growing up with consoles don't have the programming skills developed by computer users of the 80s.

Middlesex University will be the first to offer the degree when they start a one-year Master of Arts (MA) course in September.

They say the number of places available will depend on how many applicants there are, but each student will be sponsored by a company to cover course and living costs.

It has the backing of many games makers but one of the main forces behind the concept is Domark's development manager Russell Ferrier.

"The games industry was in danger of becoming stale and tired and the only solution is to seek out new blood and bring it in," he said

"Setting up a degree course will provide this new industry with educated design-trained graduates who will be able to bring fresh creative thinking to the whole area of consumer software."

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DIARY DATES

April 16

Spring All Micro Show
Venue: Bingley Hall, Staffs
Organiser: Sharward Services (0473 272002)

Last autumn's show contained 70 exhibitors - some with ST software and hardware.

April 22 to 24

MEMS '94
Venue: Wembley, London
Organiser: Westminster Exhibitions (0222 512128)
Britain's premier Midi and Electronic Music show.

September 20-25,

Live '94
Venue: Earls Court
Organiser: News Internationol (071-782 6893)

Some players in the electronic entertainment industry have pledged their support for this large consumer electronics show.

October 6-9

BBC Big Bash
Venue: NEC, Birmingham
Organiser: Haymarket Exhibitions Future World area of this big show will contain the latest computer games and virtual reality.

October 26-30

Future Entertainment Show
Venue: Earls Court II
Organiser: Future Exhibitions (0225 442244)
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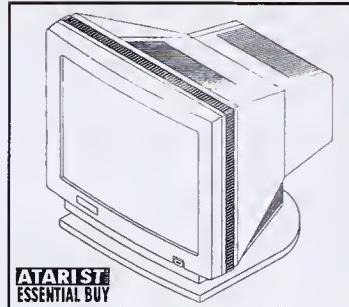
The special version for STfm/Mega ST installed with Overscan, the screen enhancer, gives a 40% bigger display.

All monitors come as a plug in and go unit, complete with Atari plug, and no adaptors are necessary.

"Essential Buy, 90%"

ST Review, May 93

without audio	SM14/f	£129.95
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ATARI ST
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Heavy Duty professional cases with 60W Power Supply, add £50.

All Prices include VAT



ATARI ST
ESSENTIAL BUY

GOLD AWARD
ST Format

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Falcon Wing 4Mb	£179.00
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14" Monitors	from £99.95
Clarity 16	£99.95
Cubase Audio	In Stock
FDI - Falcon Digital Interface	In Stock

Falcon 030 Systems

The Falcon is fast becoming the preferred choice for 8 track digital recording, with powerful programs such as Cubase Audio using it to its full potential. The DSP chip opens up a whole new world of Sound and Graphics, and we welcome you to visit our London Showroom for a demonstration.

We have been authorised by Atari to fit all recommended modifications without voiding the warranty.

The Line & Bass Mod. consists of a reduction of the microphone sensitivity by 6dB and removal of the bass boost from the audio output. All Falcon 030, supplied by us, come with the much talked about stability mod., free of charge, which is essential for direct to disk recording.

Bass/Line level mod. £60

Stability mod. £50

Falcon 030 Systems Please Call



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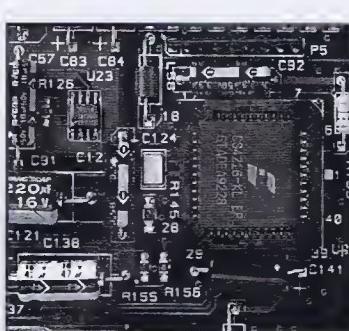
The T28/T36 Hardware accelerators boost your 8Mhz CPU into a powerful 28 or 36Mhz CPU respectively. The board fits into most STfm and MegaST computers and we are happy to arrange the fitting for you.

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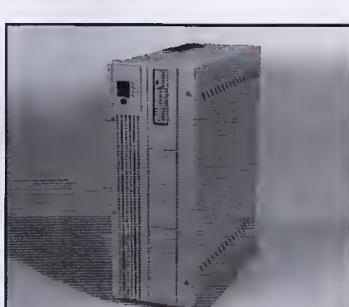
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ATARI
WORKSHOP



Don Maple with the latest releases and updates from across the Channel

Classics updated

TWO standard-setting programs from classic German Atari company Creative Computer Design have just been updated.

Diskus is a disk tool used to monitor and repair damaged hard and floppy disks. In v3 this handy program now includes full support for the Falcon with improved SCSI routines and the internal IDE drive resulting in a speed increase of up to 30 per cent.

The program's hard disk driver HD-DRIVER is far superior to Atari's own. Diskus is now fully MultiTOS compliant, supporting all new AES 4.1 features.

Tempus Word, the word processor, has been

upgraded to v2.8. It's available in three configurations: Junior, Student and Pro. All three can now use modules such as Calamus-Font and Write & Flip.

The program can also export files in the Calamus CTX format and it contains a new 600dpi printer driver. The new Write & Flip module uses Calamus or Speedo fonts in up to 999 point size and is capable of rotating and further manipulating them.

Tempus Word even incorporates a full calendar planner. For more information write to: Creative Computer Design, Postfach 1164, 65331 Eltville, Germany.

The Atari card

JANUS is a new IBM-compatible PC card which contains a full Atari-compatible computer. It's not an emulator but a self-contained Atari computer running TOS and using most of peripherals in your PC.

This includes the parallel and serial ports, hard and floppy disks, mouse, keyboard, graphic cards and the monitor. Even though the card only contains a 16MHz 68000, Janus is quite fast,

as most tasks – such as graphic output and data access – are passed on to the resident Intel processor.

The end result is that in many applications Janus is faster than the TT. It is priced at DM780 (about £310). The memory modules and TOS chips are priced separately. Janus is available from: VHF Computer GmbH, CAD/CAM-Systeme, Daimlerstr. 13, Germany.

Plug-and-play Internet

AS more and more people get access to the Internet – a worldwide network of computers – either directly or through services like CIX, the question of the right software comes up.

UPoint is a "plug and play" UUCP package for all Ataris including the Falcon but it requires TOS 1.4 or higher and at least 1Mb of RAM. It runs fully under GEM and contains everything needed to communicate with a UUCP site.

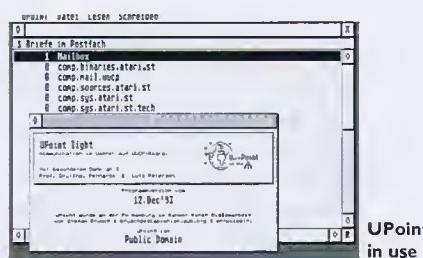
UPoint comes with an easy-to-use installation program and runs under MultiTOS and Mag!x. Email and Net-News are both supported and the program has an integrated "uucico" file transfer method.

UPoint comes in two versions: UPoint-Light which is PD and UPoint-Medium which is available from the author for DM70 (about £28). The



medium version contains additional features such as multiuser option for up to eight users, additional mail and news editing functions, archiving of sent mail and PGP message encryption.

The author of the program is Stefan Brusch, Am Bast 15, 25335 Bokholt-Hanredder, Germany.



● A new Falcon bundle has just been announced in Germany after a meeting of the network of official German Atari dealers, known as ACC (Atari Competence Centres).

The bundle will comprise a Falcon of choice – with or without a hard disk – and will include two extra products: Galactic's hard disk recording program Digit2 in v1.5, and Acher, Eberl & Seibert's resolution enhancer BlowUp Hard 1. The extra products add only DM150 (about £60) to the list price.

● THE MAUS network, frequently mentioned in EuroNews, has recently been expanded to include an extra newsgroup especially for Falcon users. Named ATARI.F030, the newsgroup is the direct result of an ever increasing number of Falcon owners.

Due to high activity in other 11 Atari groups – with an average of 400 new messages each day – Falcon users found it hard to weed out the relevant information. The new Falcon group has therefore been formed to rectify this.

● ANOTHER independent Atari show will be held in Germany in lieu of Atari's absence at CeBIT. Called proTOS '94, the show is dubbed "everything under the sun about Atari" and will be held on April 22 to 24 at the exhibitions grounds in the city of Ulm.

The first day will be business only but Saturday and Sunday will be open to the public. The response from Atari companies has been excellent and 1,300 square metres booked by the organisers will have to be expanded.

It will cost DM10 (£2.50) to get in and both an exhibition guide and software catalogue will be available at the door.

● AS the first official Jaguars are beginning to appear in Germany, a group of enthusiasts have formed Jaguar Club Deutschland. The club already has more than 200 members.

Membership benefits include various discounts, a user mag every three weeks (in German), and access to the club's BBS and so on.

Club members can also buy Jaguars directly through the club with over ten modules to choose from. For more info write to Carsten Nipkow, An der Ruthe 9, 58791 Werdohl, Germany.

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Don Maple reports from a CeBIT where, despite Atari's absence, their products were extremely well supported

The CeBIT show in Hanover, Germany is the largest computer show in the world, bigger even than the CES or COMDEX in the USA. The average 600,000 people visit 15 halls, some of which span multiple levels. The exhibition grounds are so huge that they have their own railway station, a minibus service and free taxi vans for journalists to be able to cover it all!

Traditionally, CeBIT was the place where Atari introduced their new products. Both the TT and the Falcon had their world premieres at this prestigious event.

However, due to Atari restructuring over the last 12 months and after a lot of on-again/off-again rumours, Atari decided not to attend this year.

But this did not dissuade third-party companies who exhibited on stands surrounding the spot where Atari are usually located. Ironically, that very spot was taken over by Commodore who, therefore, found themselves under siege by a ring of Atari firms.

The most impressive stand was the combined Compo/Overscan display. Compo themselves need no introduction and dazzled the crowds with Medusa T40, nicknamed the TOS workstation.

This Atari-compatible machine, introduced in Euro News several months ago, is now actually available for DM7,999 (£3,200). For this the buyer gets an attractive tower with a 32MHz Motorola 68040 processor at its heart.

This chip is double-clocked internally at 64MHz for a rated performance of 26 Mips, and it has a built-in math coprocessor (FPU) and a PMMU.

The motherboard sports a full 32-bit bus clocked at 32MHz with six card slots. Up to 128Mb of RAM can be installed right on the motherboard or up to 4GB if expansion cards are used.

The ST I/O card contains all ST-compatible ports including DMA (ACSI),



Loving support for Atari

two serial and one parallel port, Midi, IDE hard disk interface and an AT bus connector for PC graphic cards.

Other cards include Buscard (for the Atari laser printer), SCSI I card and a TrueColor graphics card capable of 1,100 x 900 pixel screen with 24-bit colour. Medusa ran many of the old favourites including Calamus SL.

Also new from Compo is the CD-ROM-ROM, a very ingenious solution enabling owners of older Atari ST machines to attach a CD-ROM with minimum hassle.

PORT USED

Almost all CD-ROM drives are SCSI devices which makes them unusable on a standard ST. CD-ROM-ROM not only solves that but also uses the otherwise rarely used ROM port. The package includes an external CD-ROM drive with driver software.

Falcon Speed, the PC/AT DOS emulator card for the Falcon, now runs in colour as the equivalent of DOS/Windows 3.1 with a VGA card.

Overscan is perhaps best known for its Falcon resolution enhancer Screenblaster, now in v2. The setup program which runs from the AUTO folder is now fully in GEM.

Another very useful part of the Screenblaster software is the Video Mode Generator (VMG) used to try out various screens. Screenblaster II sells for DM149 (£60).

But it was another Falcon accelerator that raised eyebrows. Afterburner 040

sports a 68LC040 processor running at 32MHz (and double-clocked internally to 64MHz). Up to 64Mb of RAM can be added to the Afterburner board using PS2 SIMMs.

An optional PCI bus expander will enable use of inexpensive PC graphic cards. Afterburner is nominally priced between DM1,600 and DM2,000 (£640 to £800).

VRAM 030 is a virtual memory manager for the Falcon and TT. It extends available memory by using a feature of the 68030 chip which enables it to use the hard disk as the main system memory swapping pages of memory in or out as they are needed.

Turning to video, Overscan had a number of genlock packages including Graffiti Genloc, FalcoGen and MultiGen. Genlock is a device used to overlay computer-generated text on top of a video signal, for example, to produce titles. A related program called Overlay is just such a program and it comes with a number of default video fonts.

Finally, behind the scenes Overscan showed the Nintendo's PowerGlove with an ST interface for the ST. So far, its main market has been very specialised – people such as universities and other virtual reality research institutions.

The overall impression from CeBIT is that even without Atari the vibrant third-party support in Germany continues unabated. This is further reaffirmed with smaller shows such as FEZ-a-bit in Berlin and proTOS in Ulm, both of which will be covered in the upcoming EuroNews columns.

Sound ideas

Compo showed TrakCom which turns the Falcon into a sampler with an integrated multitrack sequencer. Up to ten tracks can be played back.

Another sound-related program is a voice mail system selling for DM399 (£160). It can be best described as an intelligent digital answering machine.

MUSiCOM has been upgraded to v2.1 and Studio Photo package now has a DSP module to make full use of the Falcon. Studio Photo DSP costs DM249 (about £100).

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New service centre/repair for most Atari computers. We offer a quotation service of £10 for which we will examine your computer and report back with an exact quotation price for the repair, if the repair is carried out the £10 is then deducted from your bill

Frankfurt plays the Atari tune

Digital audio was one of the official themes at this year's Frankfurt Musik Messe, the largest and most prestigious music fair in Europe. Not just direct-to-disk digital recording but digital synthesizers, samplers, CDs and, of course, using the computer as an aid to music making.

A glass studio in the gigantic central galleria of the Messe showed the use of digital technology in all its manifestations.

Inside, the fair contained the usual mix of computer software and hi-tech equipment enough to make any musician drool, raid their piggy bank and make an appointment with the bank manager.

Some of the most interesting developments came from the major software companies, Steinberg (distributed by Harman on 081-207 5050) and Emagic (distributed by Sound Technology on 0462 480000).

UPDATED

Steinberg have upgraded Cubase Score for the Atari to v2. New features include Groove Quantise which uses parts as patterns and takes into account velocity information.

The number of tracks has been doubled and an arpeggiator added. The number of scorewriting functions has almost doubled, too, from the original version.

Cubase Audio for the Falcon has also been updated and this, too, has doubled the number of audio tracks it supports to 16!

As an all-in-one sequencing/recording machine, the Falcon is certainly looking like an attractive and affordable proposition.

For studio users, AudioSpector is a complete audio measuring and calibration program which will replace hardware alternatives. It combines a real-time level meter, a frequency domain analyser, a phase correlator and a test-tone generator. Because the program is software, it can easily be updated.

Steinberg held one of the most interesting demos of the fair during which two musicians played together live over a telephone line! They used a special Steinberg Midi to ISDN converter which will be available towards the end of the year.

Jam with your friend at the other end of the country and boost BT's profits! More practically, it allows a session musi-

Ian Waugh finds the musical Atari fit and healthy at the massive Musik Messe music show in Frankfurt



The glass studio in the central area of the Galleria was demonstrating the theme of digital audio

cian to play in any studio in the world without leaving home.

There were also some excellent demos on the Emagic stand, principally of Notator Logic Audio (which is now just called Logic Audio). This includes two new and rather amazing features.

Logic can now take an audio input and convert it to notation. It's only monophonic so it can't do chords – yet! – but it produced an amazingly accurate transcription of a guitar solo.

The other thing it does is apply Grooves to digital audio tracks. Say you've recorded a heavy rock piece – the Groove can make it swing! And it does it almost in real-time. It takes only a few seconds longer than the length of the digital audio track. Wow! The demos were done on a Mac but Logic Audio v2 will also available for the Falcon very soon.

Other goodies include a general upgrade of Logic to v2 with the addition of Environment faders, length and velocity Grooves and automatic communica-

tion with SoundDriver and SoundSurfer via AutoLink.

SoundSurfer is a universal sound librarian for Atari computers while SoundDriver is, according to the blurb, "the next logical step in the development of an intelligent sound management system".

It can edit and store sounds and settings, it supports over 100 devices and there's a context-sensitive help system. The integration of Logic and SoundDriver enables the sound names in Driver to appear automatically in Logic.

Other interesting Atari developments include additions to the Y-Not (from Newtronic on 081-691 1087) range of synth editors which now numbers over a dozen.

Y-Not wrote the editors for the Yamaha TG500, QY10 and QY20 which are free from Yamaha and which have been mentioned in the Aspects Music column. The latest editors support the Roland JV80/880, and the new Korg i2/i3, 05R/W and X3 instruments.

INTERESTING

There is now a Pro version of DVPI's Session Partner (also distributed by Newtronic) with lots more features. Drumatix is a drum pattern editor which looks very interesting and will help you create drum patterns for loading into your own sequencer.

EMC (distributed by AMG on 0252 717333) also had several new editors including ones for the E-Mu Vintage Keys and the Roland JD800, JD990 and JV80/880.

Geerdes (distributed by Newtronic) were showing Delight v1.1 which used to be called StarTrack and then StarTrack Delight. It's an altogether impressive piece of sequencing/arranging software with notation, many powerful note processing functions and which even has hooks into the Lisp programming language.

The fair certainly showed signs of renewed interest in the music market and in spite of the preponderance of PCs and Mac on show, the Atari ST and Falcon are still major players in the music software league.



The EMC stand was always busy showing its range of budget-priced Atari editors and sound managers

FaST Club

For users of Atari ST & Falcon computers

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<input type="checkbox"/> TW Clip Art Set 3	£ 8.50
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<input type="checkbox"/> Easy Text Pro DTP	£39.95
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- 20 x 3.5" DSDD disks £5.95
Following re-organisation of our PD catalogue we have lots of disks that have been used, reformatted and re-labelled. A bargain!

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Complete set of fonts suitable for use with Timeworks Publisher or any other program that uses GEM bit-mapped fonts. Ideal for newsletters, magazines, reports, and booklets. Requires high-res monitor and 300-dpi printer.

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- Textstyle - launch price £14.95
Another cracking program from Jeremy Hughes, author of Imagecopy. Enter your text into Textstyle, select a Calamus or GEM font, add text effects and justification, and the resulting picture file can be imported into a whole range of packages. Great for generating headlines for wordprocessors like First Word Plus, Redacteur or Write ON; or use it with an art package such as PixArt to make posters, banners, greetings cards, etc. Thousands of applications. RRP - £19.95

- Textstyle bundle £9.95
Order Textstyle at the same time as Imagecopy or PixArt and save another £5.

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- ST Club Catalogue Free
Probably the most comprehensive catalogue for the ST. Details on hundreds of PD and Shareware disks plus specifications of all the products listed in this advert. Disks cost £1.25ea; or just £1 for subscribers!
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- Imagecopy 2 £19.95
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Hidden away in an office in Denmark we have unearthed what must be the last stocks of this classic ST book. If you feel as if your computer knows more about computing than you do, then you need this book! A brilliant introductory text for beginners or anyone new to Atari computers. This is the authorised printed version of Y2M: beware of imitations!

Great fonts

- Calamus Font Set £8.50
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Omkron

We are the UK distributor for this famous German software publisher. Our release schedule for the English versions of their ST and Falcon software:

- PixArt £34.95
Feature packed true colour pixel painting program. PixArt is very quick, supports digitizers and graphic tablets, supports all ST-TT and Falcon screen resolutions (monochrome to 16.7 Million colours) and runs on all fully GEM-compatible graphics cards.
Other highlights: you can zoom in or out of the picture and still use all the drawing tools. PixArt has very creative block manipulation facilities that will be of great use to DTP users. PixArt is fully Falcon compatible. *Wonderful, wonderful!* is how the German Atari magazine TOS summed up its feelings about PixArt! Available: Now.
- Freeway £tba
A new generation database that combines free-form text database structures with traditional field structures. Accessible internal SQL-structure and fully Falcon compatible. Available: February
- Mortimer £14.95
Memory resident multi-function utility that can be called up from within any GEM or TOS application. Features include: text editor, printer spooler, keyboard macros, virus guard, flexible RAM disk, screen grabber, disk utilities such as file copying and disk formatting, and a pop-up pocket calculator. Available: Now
- Mortimer DeLuxe £34.95
Even more features: ten text editors, file search, disk copier, better file selector, time scheduler with alarm, and more... Fully compatible with ST, TT and Falcon computers. Available: February

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These dust covers are manufactured from top quality water resistant and tear proof nylon fabric coated with tough polyurethane and treated with an antistatic inhibitor. Unlike cheap PVC covers they may be washed and ironed. Covers are grey with blue piping.

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Please specify monitor make and model

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Ordering

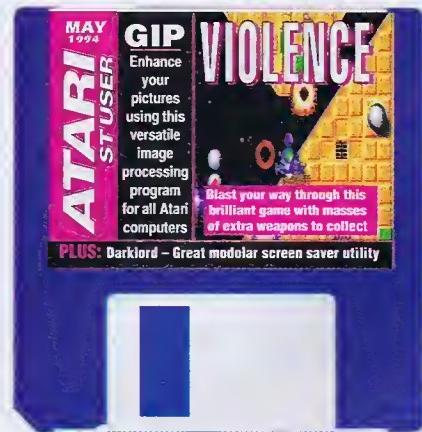
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Cover disk

COVER DISK

This month's CoverDisk is a corker. There's a rather smart image processing program and a game called Violence, for starters. Get extracting and have fun!

Be careful as you fly over the terrain, there are some raised structures into which you can crash. Not good for your ship at all



Violence

A brilliant vertical scrolling shoot-'em-up with parallax scrolling and loads of weapons to blast the aliens

VIOLENCE is a shareware vertical scrolling shoot-'em-up game, very similar to the Xenon games. It features some great graphics, parallax scrolling and brilliant gameplay.

What's more, you get lots of extra weapons to buy to increase your firepower against the hordes of alien beasts that will swarm all over you as soon as you start the game.

The first thing you will need to buy is a speed-up feature because your ship is pretty damn sluggish at the start, which makes dodging the aliens very difficult.

As you progress and kill more, your credits will rise and you will be able to spend them on some of the more expensive weapons, such as lasers.

The bottom of the screen shows your score, cash level and game level, while the left-hand side shows the energy levels for your main weapon and any additional weapons you have attached to your ship.

When you have enough cash and want to

By: Martin Barlow and Simon Dickinson

Configuration: All STs - low resolution

Filenames: X_VIOLENCE.TOS -

Self-extracting archive

Disk space required to extract:

550,912 bytes

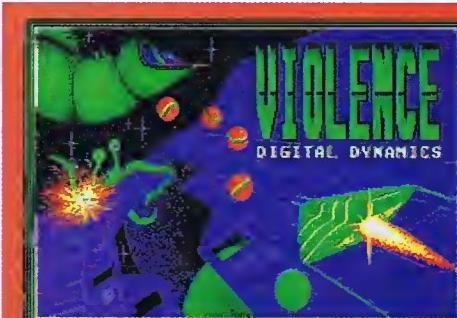
Start program with: VIOLENCE.TOS

spend it on some extra firepower, simply hold the Fire button down on the joystick or press the spacebar and you will be taken to the shop.

Move the joystick to make your selection and click the Fire button to buy it. You can then click on the exit button to get back to the game with your newly-acquired equipment and blast the hell out of anything that happens to get in your way.

You will need all your reflexes and firepower to beat the end-of-level guardian. If you do defeat the guardian, you will be taken to the next level.

If you are impressed with the game and play it regularly, send off the shareware fee of £5 (see the READ_ME file for information) and you will get a 1Mb STE version with superior sound and faster graphics. Well worth every penny.



The title says it all – lots of aliens, lots of weapons, lots of sizzling action. And those guardians take some beating



At the end of a level you will have to contend with the inevitable guardian. Kick its butt and you're on your way to the next level

GIP

Clean up and generally enhance your images with this excellent shareware image processor

BECAUSE of the space required by the example pictures, the GIP package has been split into three archives in order to extract to floppy disk systems.

X_GIP.TOS requires 210,944 bytes of disk space to extract, X_PICS.TOS requires 166,912 and X_EG_PIC.TOS is a biggie requiring 586,752 bytes for extraction.

Once you have extracted everything and deleted the archived files, you can transfer everything on to one disk, which should take up 532,480 bytes on a double-sided floppy.

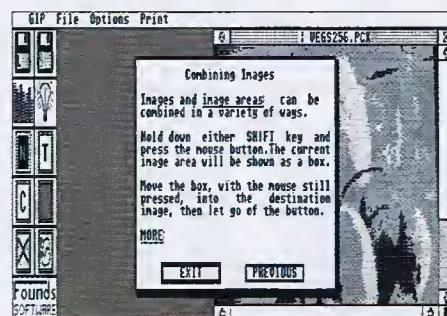
This program is ideal for those who use DTP and scanners as it will allow you to clean up or enhance greyscale images. It's especially useful in that it is totally compatible with the Falcon computer and the MultiTOS operating system.

GIP supports many picture formats, with the ability to load TIFF, GIF, PCX, Degas and Degas Elite picture formats among others. When you have processed your image and are ready to save it, you can do so to either IMG or TIFF formats, both of which are supported by many DTP packages.

There is no restriction on image size, other than available memory of course. This is where those with only 512k may encounter problems, depending on the size of the picture you want to load.

GIP converts every image loaded into a 256-level greyscale image with one byte being used per pixel. This means that a 320 x 200 picture will consume 64,000 bytes internally. The image also has to be converted to the Atari display which adds another 32,000 bytes, giving

By: Stephen Found
Configuration: ST/STE/Falcon - All resolutions
Filenames: X_GIP.TOS (program files), X_PICS.TOS, X_EG_PIC.TOS (example picture files) - All self-extracting archives
Disk space required to extract: See main text below
Start program with: GIP.PRG



GIP is an excellent tool for enhancing and applying all sorts of effects to your pictures

a total of 96k to load a 320 x 200 16-colour image. Therefore, if you want to load larger or multiple images, a memory upgrade is recommended.

By sheer coincidence (no marketing ploy intended – honest!), this ties in very nicely with the fact that Atari ST User is offering readers the chance to upgrade their memory for very attractive prices. Turn to page 34 for details.

GIP allows a total of four images to be loaded simultaneously with each image appearing in its own window.

Using the CoverDisk

Write-protect your CoverDisk now by sliding the write-protect tab so you can see through the hole at the top right corner of the CoverDisk.

In order to fill the disk with as many programs as possible, ST User employs disk compression techniques when placing large programs on the CoverDisk.

These files are termed "archived files" and cannot be directly executed from the CoverDisk. Archived files are identified by their names beginning with X_.

Any files that do not begin with X_ are actually folders containing files which are not compressed.

These uncompressed files should also be copied to a blank disk. Following are a series of step-by-step instructions for using the CoverDisk.

Important: The ST User CoverDisk uses an extended format of 10 sectors and 81 tracks to increase storage space. This means you will not be able to copy the disk using the ST's built-in copying feature.

To make a backup of the CoverDisk, you will need a copying utility, such as FastCopy 3. Such utilities are available from all good PD libraries.

Alternatively, you may use a formatting utility, to format a disk to the same 10 sector, 82 track specification as the CoverDisk and simply copy all files to this.

Using archived files

Note: When copying files, the ST refers to disk A and disk B in its on-screen instructions. Disk A refers to the disk being copied while disk B refers to the disk being copied to (usually a pre-formatted blank disk).

1. Format a disk.
2. Copy the required archived file to the formatted disk.
3. Run the copied archived file. It will now automatically "extract" to its full size.
4. Once complete, delete the X_ filename as this is no longer required. The formatted disk should now contain all the files that were in the archive file.

Normal uncompressed files

1. Format a blank disk
2. Open the required folder and copy all files in the folder to the formatted disk.
3. You can now immediately run the program/s as is.

Highlighting and dragging files and icons

1. Click once on the item, it should turn black (the item is now highlighted).
2. If you keep the left mouse button held down on the item, a dotted outline of the item appears and you may then re-position it by moving the mouse to the required position (effectively dragging the icon) and releasing the mouse button.

If you are new to the ST and did not understand some of the terminology in the preceding steps. There now follow an explanation of some basic techniques needed.

Formatting a disk

1. Place the disk to be formatted in the drive.
2. Highlight the drive A icon.
3. Move mouse pointer up to the FILE menu at the top of the screen and select FORMAT.
4. A box will appear. Click on OK.
5. Another box will appear. Ensure DOUBLE SIDED is selected then click on OK. The disk is now being formatted.

Copying files to another disk

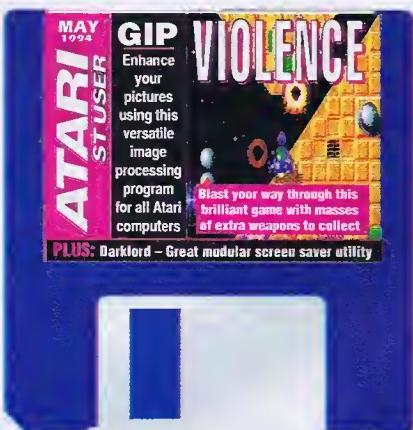
1. Select the file to be copied by highlighting it and dragging it to the disk B icon.
2. A box entitled COPY FILE(s) appears. Click on OK and follow instructions on the screen exchanging disks as requested.



Those extra weapons come in mighty handy on later levels. Here, two new lasers are being tested. Come and get it alien scum!



At the local ship shop (what an awful pun), you can buy all kinds of juicy weapons and power-ups to extend your ship's firepower



GBell

Envious of the Mac and PC which can play sampled sound effects for different events? Now GBell brings this feature to the Atari

Many of you have no doubt realised the Mac and PC have the ability to play sampled sounds to accompany special events, such as for the alarm clock, error messages, window open and others.

In fact, there are commercial packages for the Mac and PC selling for over £30 for the privilege.

There is much to be said about the importance sound plays in all our lives. In the emerging world of multimedia, sound is as important as visuals. As a magazine publisher, we at Atari

By: Garde Eggesbe and Oe Abrahamsen

Configuration: STE/Falcon/TT -

All resolutions

Filenames: X_GBELL.TOS -

Self-extracting archive

Disk space required to extract:

129,505 bytes

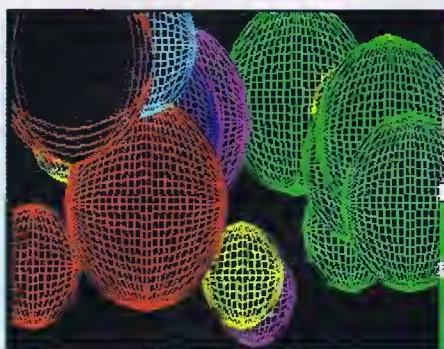
Start program with: GBELL.PRG
placed in AUTO folder

ST User use Macs daily in our production process. Many of these have been tailored to each individual's personal preference, with sampled sound effects for somewhat mundane tasks or for important events requiring attention.

In fact, we would hazard a guess that such mundane computer-related tasks as dragging unwanted files to the trashcan can become less boring if they are accompanied by the Monty Python "Bring out your dead" sketch!

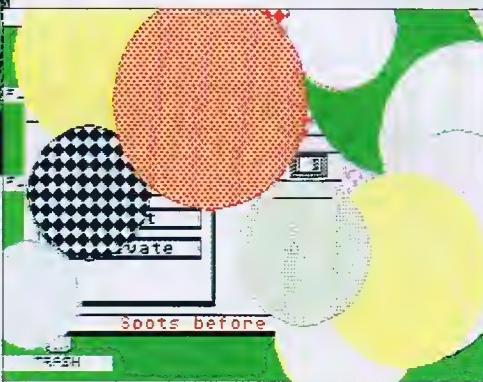
There is no reason why today's Atari computers with DMA sound chip cannot handle such trivial auditory tasks. And so the author of GBell must have thought too, which is why he has brought just this ability to the Atari. Of course, the fact that DMA sound is used does mean that GBell will only work on STEs, Falcons and TTs.

So spruce up your computer sessions with a little audio feedback from GBell. There are also some example sound files to get you started. Check out the GBELL.MAN documentation file for full instructions on installation.



Globes, just one of the many example saver modules written by the author

After a certain length of time, which can be set by you, the screen saver module is activated automatically



Darklord screen saver

Tired of the boring old screen savers currently available for your ST? Darklord has a great deal to offer

It is common knowledge that leaving an unchanging image on a computer screen for long periods – particularly a high contrast one – will eventually cause burn-in.

A screen image is created on the monitor picture tube by an electron beam that rapidly scans the screen, essentially lighting up the phosphor dots which line the inside of the tube.

If an unchanging picture is left on display for long periods of time, certain phosphor dots are going to be relentlessly bombarded more than others.

This causes a deterioration of these dots and when you turn off your monitor, you'll see that the image is still visible and won't go away.

Screen savers have been around for quite some time and they're specifically designed to prevent such burn-in. They work by loading in to memory and keeping track of the input devices, such as the keyboard and mouse and joystick ports.

If no activity is detected after a certain time, the program comes to life and changes the screen display to a state where burn-in cannot occur. Some screen savers merely turn the

By: Steve Pedder

Configuration: All STs (including Falcon) -

All resolutions

Filenames: X_OLORO.TOS -

Self-extracting archive

Disk space required to extract:

368,640 bytes

Start program with: DARKLORD3.ACC
in root directory

screen completely black, while some draw changing patterns or cycle the screen colours. Darklord is one of a new breed of more versatile screen savers in that the screen display change can be anything from simple invert to a lengthy animation sequence.

What's more, Darklord is not restricted to one effect. Thanks to its modular design, you can load various screen saver effects. Also, for the programmers among you, and unlike some other modular screen savers, Darklord offers full access to the VDI graphics routines.

This greatly extends the range of effects available and makes writing your own modules much easier. There are also some text files and example source files describing how to write your own modules in either C or Assembler.

This is a great program and should any of you decide to write your own modules, please send them in.

CoverDisk Hotline

Hatline number: 0625 859766,
2pm to 5pm every Wednesday.

If you have any other problems with the CoverDisk, our technical editor, Darren Evans, will be available on the Atari ST User CoverDisk Hatline. Help is only available within the times specified, and no advice will be available outside these hours.

If a fault turns up...

With thousands of disks being duplicated each month, a few will inevitably be faulty. Fortunately, we can help you. Send the faulty disk to:

PC Wise, Dowlais Tap Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan CF48 2YY.

A replacement will be sent free of charge but please allow 28 days for delivery.

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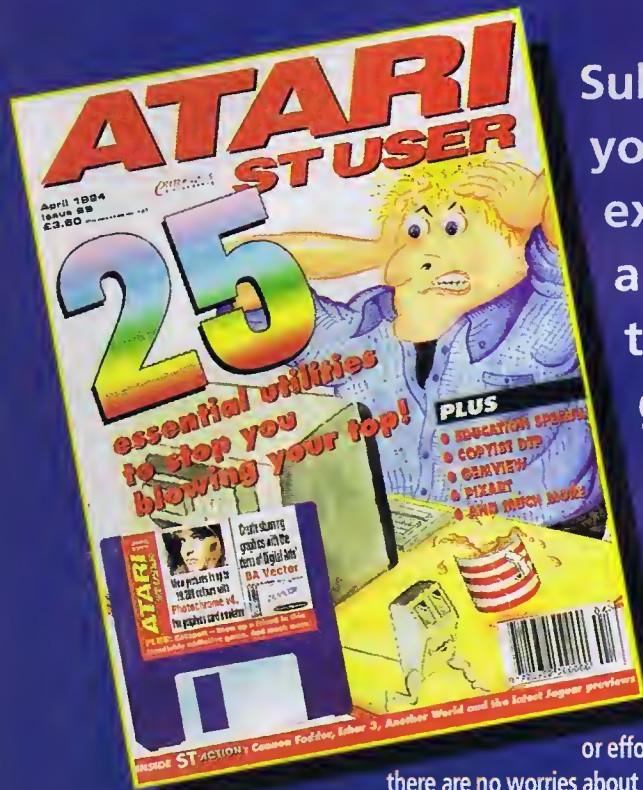
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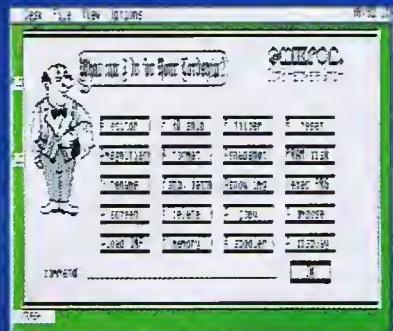
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"Zool is probably the best platform title you're ever likely to see on the ST. Neat graphics coupled with a brilliant gameplay make the antics of Zool a winner from start to finish."

Gamer, Atari ST User November 1993

Whichever definition of multimedia you use – and there are several to choose from – the word video will almost certainly appear in it somewhere.

Add computer-created graphics, text and sound to a full motion video clip and you move into a completely different ball game with endless possibilities for presentations, education and animation.

Video digitisers convert video images into digital form but at 25 frames a second (normal video speed) it doesn't take long to fill up a hard disk or two even at low resolutions.

And if you want to play back the result, it would require an extremely fast hard drive to load 25 of those 24-bit images back into the computer every single second!

As a result the two budget digitisers reviewed over the next three pages opt for mono-only recording and even then using 16 or 64 shades of grey. They can, however, both capture full colour stills, so it is a cheap and relatively cheerful way of getting reasonably good quality colour images into a computer.

Incidentally, you have to exercise great care when digitising video images as commercial material is invariably copyright. Even *Atari ST User* was advised not to include digitised stills from TV or video, so everything you see is copyright me!

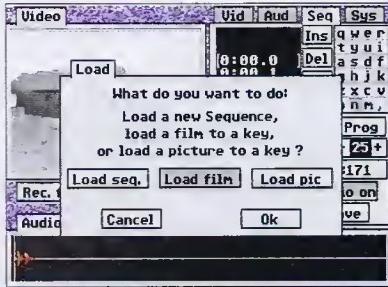
VideoMaster

HiSoft's budget digitiser, VideoMaster, is available in separate versions for the ST and Falcon. The hardware is to all intents and purposes identical (except that the ST version has audio input while the Falcon has its own built-in port) and the software is so similar you'd have trouble telling it apart. The main difference, not surprisingly, is in what you can achieve.

The ST version can handle sound samples up to 16kHz, motion video in up to 16 shades of grey and digitised stills in Spectrum format with as many as S12 different colours.

A 1Mb ST is recommended with 2Mb a better bet. I found I could squeeze almost 500 frames (20 seconds of video) into a 4Mb ST although it should be pointed out that it is only 160 x 100 pixels in size.

The Falcon version, on the other hand, can sample in stereo at full 16 bit resolution (at a fixed frequency of 12kHz), digitises moving video in 64 grey shades (160 by 100 pixels) and can digitise colour stills containing anything



Sequences can be put together by assigning clips to certain key presses

Video

up to 32,768 colours. It runs on any colour monitor, including VGA, but plenty of RAM is recommended. A 4Mb Falcon can hold around 150 frames with audio. Even on a 14Mb job, you'd be lucky to get 800 frames in memory.

VideoMaster itself lurks inside a 5.5in by 3in plastic box that plugs straight into the Atari's cartridge port. The box has two black dials, one for contrast and the other for brightness, and a composite video socket for hooking up to the video source.

SPLITTER

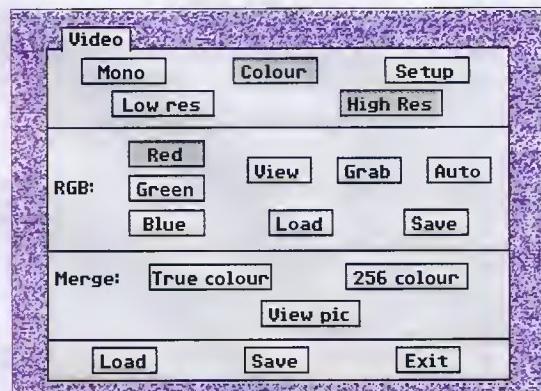
To grab colour stills a ColourMaster colour splitter is required. This 4in by 5in box plugs in between the video signal and the VideoMaster but needs a 5V power supply from a lead into the spare joystick port and there's another link to the parallel printer port. To say that it's untidy is no understatement.

The VideoMaster software comes on

one disk and TruePaint, which is bundled with it, comes on four more.

It's just as well because VideoMaster saves only in the TruePaint TPI format and TruePaint is essential to turn it into a TIFF or other colour image format.

The manual is excellent and clearly written with easy to follow guides to



Lights, camera... Action Man?

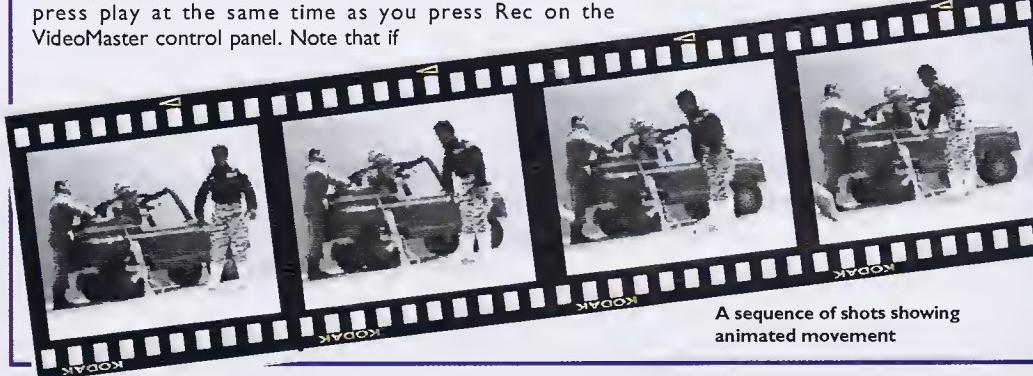


You can watch your digitised clip at any speed

time, the final film will be smooth and realistic, so it pays to take it slowly.

Next record as much of the film as possible in your chosen digitiser (this is VideoMaster Falcon). The camcorder (with playback facility) is hooked straight to the digitiser cartridge and the film can be replayed and viewed on the screen by pressing the Watch button.

Set the camcorder to the start of the part of the film you want to digitise and press play at the same time as you press Rec on the VideoMaster control panel. Note that if



vitals



This 640 x 400 true colour image has nearly 5,000 colours

creating and editing film, grabbing stills and generally messing about with video.

The interface is well designed and makes saving and playing back video clips remarkably simple. You can sample at one speed and play back at another, reverse sequences or cut out unwanted frames and even string together several clips to make a complete show.

Editing is particularly easy and it is even possible to alter frames in a paint or image processing package and reload

them into the sequence if desired.

A freeware utility lets you play back the films in full screen mode or with basic special effects like quarters, a diagonally split screen or one window on top of another. The quality of the colour stills (up to 640 x 400/480) is surprisingly good and just as good as a low resolution colour hand scanner.

Product: VideoMaster ST/Falcon
Supplier: HiSoft, The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5OE
Telephone: 0525 718181
Price: £69.95/£99.95
Configuration: All Ataris, 1Mb or more recommended

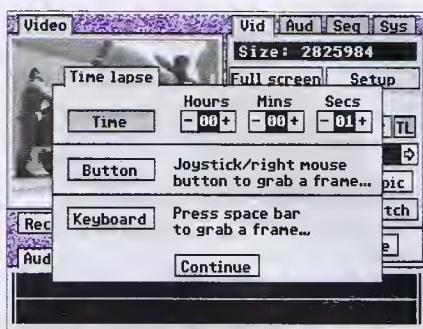
Make movies with your Atari using effects which only five years ago were the exclusive domain of professional film-makers.

Andrew Wright sets the tape rolling

you press Rec Film, the sound will be recorded as well.

Since the soundtrack consisted mainly of rude phrases revolving around Action Man's refusal to remain in the position he was given, I opted out of that one.

Spend time fiddling with the brightness and contrast controls on the cartridge as you can see the effects in real time, and the quality of your finished work depends on the care you



Select a nice slow sample rate

put in now. It also pays to use a very slow sample rate which is why you need to take your hands from the models for at least a second or so. One or two frames a second is fine but you can go for one of the manual options instead if you prefer.

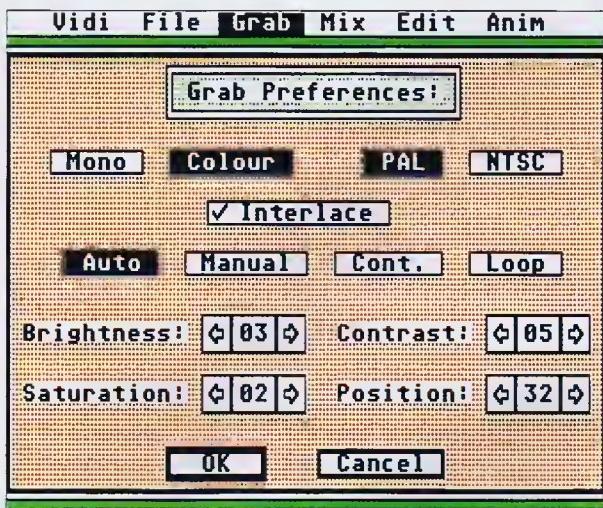
Note that the time lapse facility (TL) lets you digitise a frame at any given interval. In theory you could film something that happens very slowly – such as an egg hatching, a snail crawling along a path or even a flower opening in the morning – and then sample the video at intervals of a minute or so.

This trick is often used on wildlife programmes to condense hours of slow moving activity into a shorter, more watchable sequence.

Move through the sequence frame by frame. When you come to a frame where hands appear, mark the start of the block and when you come to the last one in that sequence, mark the end of the block.

Now you can cut that entire sequence (Cut Block) and move on to the next. Eventually you'll end up with a clip consisting entirely of your models and no sign of the hands that moved them. Played back at suitable speed, the clip will look quite realistic.





Grabbing options in VidiST



Vidi ST

Vidi ST (12) is a single product that will work with all Ataris, including the Falcon, though again what you can actually achieve will depend on which machine you have.

It is a neat 4in by 3.5in box that plugs directly into the ST or Falcon's cartridge port but no separate colour splitter is required and the software takes a completely different approach.

Composite video input can be either the standard phono type or S-video for better camcorders. There are two screwdriver-only dials for altering brightness and scan width.

Requirements are basically a colour monitor and 1Mb of RAM, but 2Mb should be the minimum on an ST (only one Spectrum image can be stored in memory on a 1Mb model) and 4Mb on the Falcon.

Vidi ST can digitise video in 16 shades of grey at full screen resolution (320 by 200) and grabs stills with up to 4,096 colours – 12 bits, hence the name Vidi ST (12).

The software has a GEM mode for loading, viewing and saving files and a completely different grab mode for handling video that has a floating panel taking up a third of the screen and offering access to four different sub-modes for grabbing, mixing, editing and the carousel.

The latter shows up to 12 images at a time with a maximum depending on memory. On a 4Mb machine, up to 50 frames can be stored. Outwardly there's no difference between the ST and Falcon versions (the software is the same) except when it comes to displaying images. Digitised stills can be mixed and



This image was digitised on an ST and mixed into a true colour TIFF file

saved in 24-bit formats but such images can't be viewed except on the Falcon.

Vidi ST has some pretty sophisticated editing and filtering functions. In addition to contrast and brightness (which are software controlled) there is gamma correction, colour balance and sharpening plus more exotic filters like pixelisation, negative, quantisation, median, emboss and convolution.

Images can be saved in Degas, NEO, IMG, ART, Spectrum 512, Windows BMP, TIFF, and Amiga IFF formats.

Users faced with the choice of which budget digitiser to buy will have a hard time. VideoMaster is cheaper, it saves in more colours, it has better motion video in a more realistic 64 shades and it samples and plays audio too.

Vidi ST is much tidier; it offers some good image processing effects and colour mixing, and it can display motion video in full screen mode in real time, albeit in only 16 colours. What's more the stills are easily as good as those produced by the HiSoft product, despite having fewer colours.

Product:	VidiST (12)
Supplier:	Rambo, 2B Young Square, Brucefield Industrial Estate, Livingston EH54 9BX
Telephone:	0506 414631
Price:	£149.95
Configuration:	All Ataris, 1Mb or more recommended

The mixing options in Vidi ST – even ST owners can create true colour images

Matrix Screeneye

If you're a Falcon owner and the capture of digitised stills is more important to you than the ability to create video sequences, then the Matrix Screeneye may be what you've been waiting for.

A brand new product from Germany, Matrix Screeneye is a compact 3in long digitiser card that fits snugly into the Falcon's expansion slot. A lead from the card runs through the Falcon's cartridge port and ends in a standard phono-style connector which can be plugged directly into the composite Video Out socket of a



The Screeneye accessory software from Compo

Video editing

Most camcorder owners like to edit the film as they transfer it to a VCR tape for viewing. In the main this means cutting out unwanted footage and rearranging some clips into a different order.

There are three ways to do it. Firstly, you can edit manually, by hooking your camera to your VCR and pressing the right buttons at the right time.

Secondly, you can use things called edit controllers – the Sony model on the right costs around £200 – which offer push button editing and work in conjunction with most VCRs.

Thirdly, you can go for a higher quality VCR with what are termed insert editing facilities. These are extremely expensive but they really are the business if you're into video.

Digitisers aren't particularly helpful as far as editing is concerned. In theory it would be great to digitise films, play with them on the computer and then re-record them in the desired sequence with some titling and special effects like fades and wipes thrown in.

Unfortunately you are limited by available memory and, as we've seen, comparatively few frames can be stored in RAM. Also, to be able to replay the video at 25 frames a second, the resolution has to be kept low (very few computers have the processing power to display full screen motion video).

Professional studios can be set up to do all this and more, though they are almost always based around the Commodore Amiga. Equipment at that level is likely to cost thousands but it just doesn't exist on the Atari platform. Ah, well, try getting an Amiga to sample sounds or DTP a decent document...

camera or VCR. The software supplied with the Screeneye is only in preview stage at present but the real-time screen image is displayed crisply and cleanly in full colour at 180 x 144 pixel resolution.

It can be increased in size but displays some slight jerkiness. The program can also run as an accessory so you can write letters or work out your accounts while watching a video or even TV!

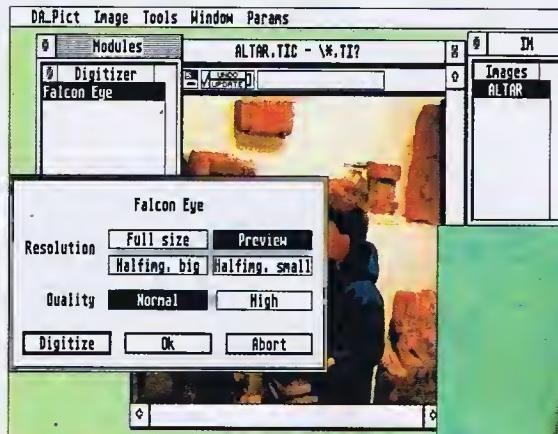
The quality of the digitised stills is way ahead of the competition and works extremely well with DA's Picture. Images are saved as true 24-bit TIFF files at up to 768 x 576 pixel resolution, and entire sequences can be saved to disk, provided you have the memory and a sufficiently large hard drive. A 4Mb Falcon, for example, will only store about 70 frames or three seconds of full motion video.

The UK distributors are Compo, who will be selling the card with the desk and accessory driver software very shortly,



but CGS are already bundling the card with DA's Picture, the new – and very tasty – image processing software for £299. It should prove to be an irresistible offer for Falcon owners.

Create great stills from cameras such as this one



DA's Picture has its own digitising module especially for the Matrix card

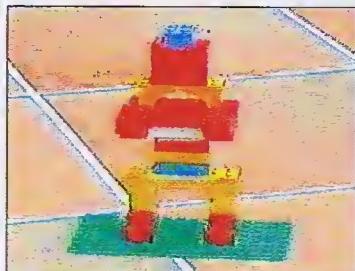


This colour image was digitised using the Matrix card – the quality is superb



New equipment makes home editing easy

Fun with video



The Lego model – OK, so I'm not too good at it these days...

There are scores of things you can do with editing facilities like those in VideoMaster. Take the Lego sequence, a simple Lego object filmed being taken apart bit by bit.

It was then digitised in VideoMaster and, in edit mode, reversed at the click of a button. When played back at a higher speed it looks as though the model is actually being built – and in double quick time!

Other interesting effects can be achieved by adding or removing critical frames. Adding extra frames which are the same as the previous one has the effect of slowing one particular action down while removing in-between frames can speed things up.

You can even save frames to disk

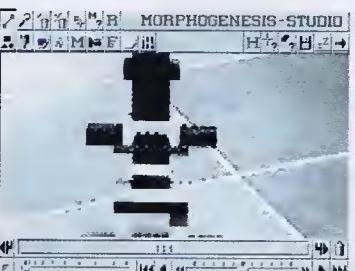


Three frames showing the Lego model being built

and edit them in a paint package like TruePaint – all kinds of weird (and rather uncomplimentary) things can be done.

Programs like Chroma Studio will be superb fun tools – you could hijack a particular sequence in a home video by saving a frame to disk, importing it into Chroma and then morphing the subject of that frame in some way.

Chroma will even generate a series of frames that can be loaded back into VideoMaster! I do like the idea of a film of the mother-in-law on the beach being turned into a frog.



Chroma Studio and home video – it will even have built in links to the Titan Designs digitiser

With the coming of cheaper home video and the increasing number of camcorder users, it makes sense to look at some of the ways you can enhance your home videos using your computer and some inexpensive hardware and software.

You might be proud of those long rolling videos showing your day out in the deserts of Tunisia, but after the first few seconds most viewers are likely to turn off completely. Why not add some text on top to keep the audience interested?

In the same way, it's hard to watch a home video without a constant barrage of questions. Some occasional text can be useful to point out locations and dates and identify people.

Another frequent problem is the five minutes of blank tape at the start. It makes sense avoiding the first few feet of tape, as the quality is often poor, but why not fill it with title screens and some credits?

You may not realise it but all Ataris except the early models without an M in the model number such as STFs are PAL-compatible (M stands for TV modulator) so you can record everything that appears on your computer screen direct to videotape.

Just take the TV lead supplied with all STFMs, STEs and Falcons, plug one end into your computer and the other into the Aerial In socket on the back of your VCR. Next you'll have to retune the VCR, as the VCR and computer both operate on channel 36, and there's often a small screw at the back that requires careful adjustment until you get a good picture.

Video titling and animation

Video Supreme & ScreenMaker Goodman International

Video Supreme and its sister program ScreenMaker are budget offerings from Goodman International, but as if to prove that cheap doesn't mean nasty, they have to be the best video titling packages available on the ST.

Both programs work on any Atari, even 520s, although I had some trouble with a Falcon despite its claim to be compatible. Both come with printed documentation but the ScreenMaker manual is far better with a step-by-step tutorial.

The interfaces are rather garish and it takes some work to get the program going but the end results are well worth the effort. Video Supreme is nothing at

all on its own. It is simply a souped-up slide show program that will display images for a set amount of time, add all kinds of special transition effects and save the sequence for later use when recording. A paint or drawing package is



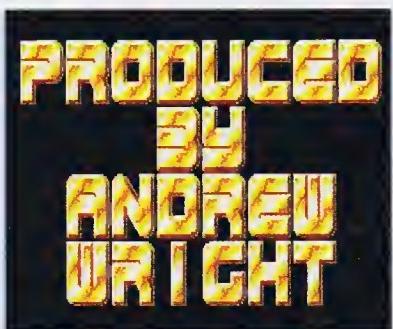
ScreenMaker has 70 fonts waiting to be used



Video Supreme has five parts or modules



This is the sequencer main screen where screens and transitions are planned



Go on, give yourself some credit!



One of the more usable fonts from ScreenMaker – simple screens like this are very effective

Pro

needed to actually create the graphics or titles unless you have ScreenMaker which actually creates text screens from a choice of some 70-odd fonts.

The Video Supreme program consists of five main modules: the editor for creating sequences, the preparer for readying sequences for the runner, a quick try program for those too impatient to get started, the sequence runner itself, and a compacter for compacting PII and NEO screens to save disk space.

The runner program can be freely distributed as the main video titling program can be used without a video to produce disk-based demos and game introductions.

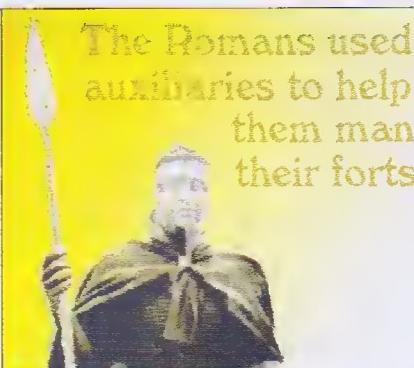
Sequences up to 200 frames long can be created and recorded on video but this isn't moving video and each frame is likely to stay on screen for at least a few seconds.

Graphics in PII, NEO and STOS MBK format can be included in sequences with 270 different ways of displaying each screen and 184 ways of dissolving or wiping them. Sound samples up to 100k long in *.SAM format can be included with playback speeds of between six and 20kHz.

ScreenMaker has a built-in text editor for screen creation and choosing fonts is simple although the restriction on having them a maximum of 32 pixels high is a bit of a nuisance.

Some of them are also pretty hard to read and should be used with care, but on the whole this is a darned good way to start off those tapes.

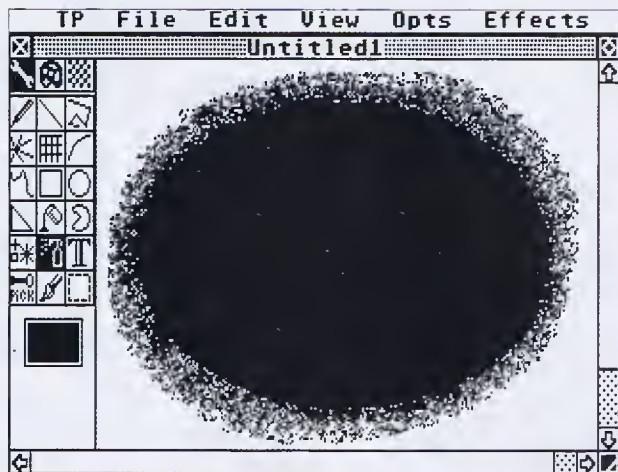
The alternatives



Using TruePaint's animation facilities. This is a digitised frame from the video itself which has been animated to evolve slowly and recede into the background. It only takes a few minutes with TruePaint's block operations

video productions

It doesn't take expensive equipment to add a bit of oomph to those boring home videos. Andrew Wright reveals some in-crowd techniques



A graphics package like TruePaint can be used to add effects with a genlock



When the computer image is mixed with live video, only those areas that are close to black actually show the image

Product: Video Supreme ScreenMaker
Supplier: Goodman International, 16, Connaught Close, Mair Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent
Telephone: 0782 335650
Price: £14.95/£11.95
Configurations: All Ataris

Genlocks

Genlocks allow the computer's screen output, be it the GEM desktop or some fancy titling, to be mixed with or overlaid on an external video signal such as that from a camcorder or VCR, and simultaneously displayed on a TV or

monitor or recorded to another videotape. In this way, you can add subtitles to your film or other special effects such as wipes and fades.

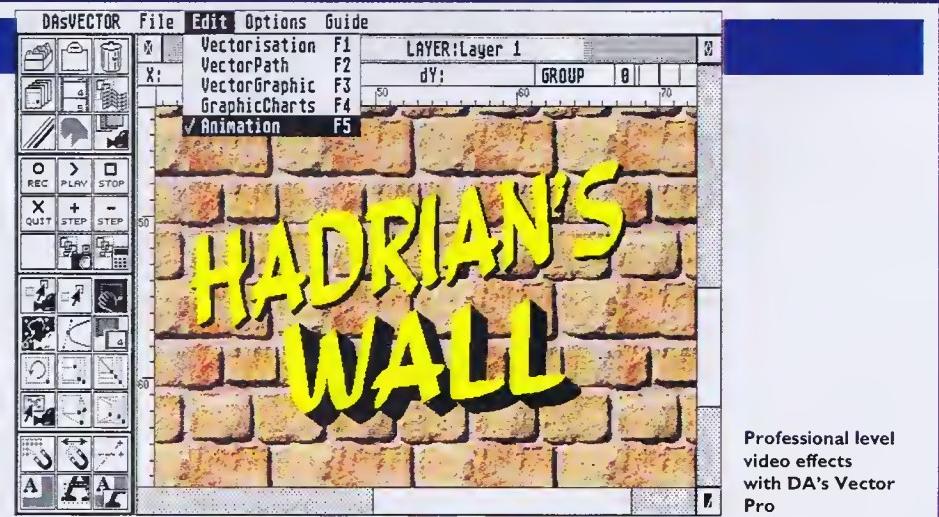
Most software should work with a

There are always alternatives. If you don't fancy Video Supreme's STOS-based approach, you can always go DIY and do the sequencing yourself. It isn't too hard - well, not the first time, anyway - but if you're planning on giving all your video tapes the treatment, a dedicated program is the best bet.

There are several slide shows in the public domain which display Degas, Neo and Tiny images one after the other (either in the order they are placed in the folder or alphabetical order).

If you find one that waits for a key press before moving on, you can control a sequence of Degas frames designed in any paint package. Just switch the VCR to record and away you go.

You can also use the animation facilities in programs like TruePaint and Prism Paint. Simply replay an animation while recording and you have a smooth sequence of events



limited only by your own imagination.

At the other end of the scale comes DA's Vector Pro with its top notch vector-based animation features, including movable camera

and an utterly obscene number of special effects using images and vector text. It's particularly good on the Falcon or an ST with graphics card.

genlock. Whatever is displayed on the screen is mixed with the video output, so you can use paint programs, vector graphics packages, text effects programs or dedicated titling software.

The only hard part is remembering which colours to use. The genlock will treat black and dark colours as transparent, and white or light colours as solid.

As a result, if you create a black background and display white text, when mixed with the live video you will simply see white text overlying the image. It's best to experiment to find the best colour for a particular sequence.

Titan Designs'

Graffiti

The Graffiti genlock from Titan Designs reviewed here is the first pre-production model, although no outward changes are expected in the production model which should be available as you read this.

The Graffiti comes in an attractive black box with yellow dials and gold logo. It can be attached directly to a Falcon and STE but an additional adapter needs to be fitted inside the case for other models such as the

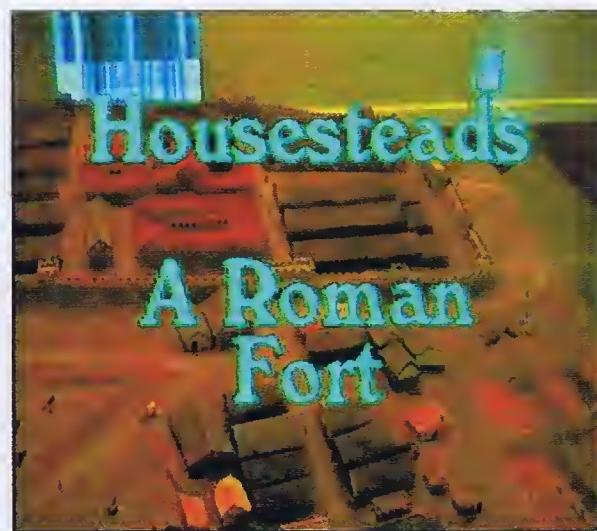


STFM. The 50-odd page manual contains precise instructions for each model with plenty of helpful diagrams.

Graffiti will use any resolutions available, including true colour modes, with the addition of overscanning on the STE

and Falcon computers (overscanning makes the picture fill the screen regardless of the black border).

Two display modes are supported, additive and overlay. The additive process is more commonly termed



Multigen vine Micros

The Vine Micros Multigen has been around for some time, though it's rarely publicised these days. Designed to work with any computer, including PCs, Macs and Amigas, it comes with a special set of leads for connecting to a Falcon or ST/STE and a mains adaptor for the power.

The Multigen consists of a small grey box with no less than seven sockets on the back, not including the socket for the mains adaptor. These consist of Computer In and Out, RGB Out, composite Video In and Out and S-Video In and Out for the more upmarket camcorders and videos.

The first problem is that the sockets on the rear don't quite match those in the manual which certainly caused me some confusion. Vine state they are in the process of amending the manual. It's also necessary to set a dipswitch on the rear for PAL compatibility. The Multigen will work with any Atari from the STFM onwards (earlier models will need a TV modulator fitting) and a standard colour monitor such as the SC1224 or Philips.

News of the Falcon clearly hasn't yet filtered through to Vine but it works just as well as an ST, except for the fact that it only supports a maximum of 256,000 colours in 640 x 480 resolution owing to memory limitations. Unlike the Graffiti, a second RGB-type output display is required if

you want to see what is being recorded, as the Computer Out feed displays only the computer screen and not the overlaid image as does the Graffiti.

On the front panel are five buttons. The freeze button uses the genlock's video memory to store and stabilise the computer's current picture, although it didn't appear to make a vast difference.

Second is the overscan option, but this is locked on for PAL monitors. The third button is for switching between video sources (composite or S-Video), the fourth selects the genlock mode - either overlay, mix or standard - and the last selects fade, which fades the computer signal in or out.

There is a key level adjustment facility which lets you vary the brightness at which a colour becomes transparent - for example if you want to overlay dark red text which would normally be transparent.

The Multigen looks pricy at exactly twice the price of the new Graffiti, although it does have the advantage of cross-platform compatibility, of course, as it works with other machines.

It's also small and very compact and supports higher quality S-Video input too for those who need it. The price does include video output leads include Scart, S-Video and composite.



transparency, as the video image will show through the computer-generated graphics, while overlay mode is used to blot out some of the video signal.

Connecting Graffiti is nice and straightforward. There are four connec-

Genlocks are an excellent tool for enhancing videos, particularly in education, as you can keep the writing on the screen for the benefit of slower readers



tors at the back, Computer In, Video In, Monitor Out (Atari colour monitor compatible) and Video Out (composite video). There is also a power socket for the 12V mains adaptor and a lead for connecting your Atari to the genlock, both of which are supplied.

DESTINATION

Interestingly the genlocked signal is sent to both monitor and composite Video Out sockets so only one display is needed. If a second is required, you can always run a TV from the destina-

Genlocks don't give a pixel perfect display owing to the technology in use. The problem is, of course, that saving to tape and then redigitising the image can give a much worse impression of what you actually see. This is a dummy shot tweaked side by side with a real life image to show something very close to what genlocked output really looks like



TruePaint and SpeedoGDOS are behind these subtitles

tion VCR's RF socket. It also means you can watch a background video on your SC1224 or Philips monitor while still using your computer!

To get Graffiti up and running properly, you need to run a small synchronisation program with some fairly obvious settings obtained by pressing the relevant function keys.

The front panel of the Graffiti genlock has three variable controls – pan, brightness and colour. A further switch allows you to manually toggle between overlay and transparency effects.

Pan adjusts the video image horizontally for alignment with the computer generated image while brightness and colour should be fairly obvious, though not so obvious is the fact that it allows real-time special effects such as turning colour to mono or fading images by turning the brightness up or down.

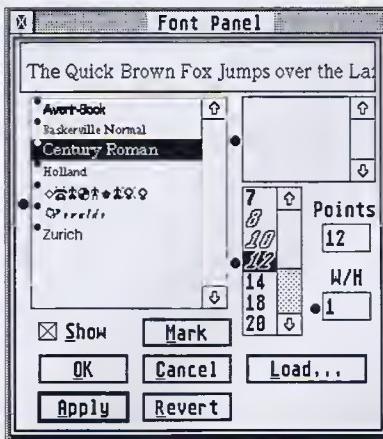
The Graffiti works very well and once the three dials are tuned – a process that can take some time – the picture quality is very good. Two vertical lines appear on the display but this should be corrected in production versions.

With the addition of the Impro Animate video sequencer, currently still under development but for sale separately, Graffiti should prove to be a very attractively priced package for those wanting to play with video effects.

Product: Multigen genlock
Supplier: Supreme/ScreenMaker
Telephone: 0843 225714
Price: £360
Configuration: Any Atari

Product: Graffiti genlock
Supplier: Titan Designs, 6 Wetherford Way, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4AX
Telephone: 021-414 1630
Price: £179.99
Configuration: All Ataris





One of the most important dialogues in Papyrus is the font panel. Fonts are grouped together in "font families" (the different sizes of one font) and non-existent sizes are generated by the program "on the fly". OK closes the dialogue, but Apply will keep it open, ready for further alterations to the settings if you are not happy with the immediate result.

ST owners certainly cannot complain about a lack of choice in word processing software: First Word Plus, That's Write, Calligrapher, Word Perfect, Signum, Script, Protect, AtariWorks and Wordflair are just some of the commercial offerings that spring to mind, and there are also a few eminently usable public domain text crunchers.

No other software category has so much fierce competition between the different vendors, and you would have thought that the last thing someone like HiSoft would want to do is to join the fray with yet another one. Unless, of course, it has something very special to offer that the competition cannot match.

The new kid on the block is called Papyrus and, like so much new software these days, is an import from Germany.

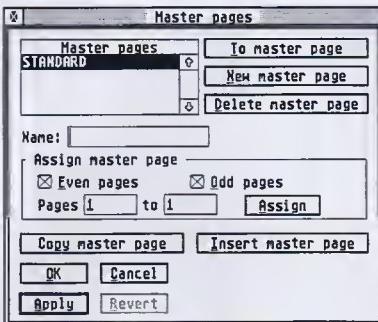
The fact that Papyrus has carved more than a small niche for itself in the even more competitive German word processing market should in itself indicate that this is more than yet another "also ran", just as HiSoft's legendary reputation for excellent user support should ensure that Papyrus will be no one-day wonder. So what has it got to make its rivals sit up and take it seriously?

EVOLUTION

The short answer is that Papyrus promises to lead in the way in what has become the dominant trend in the evolution of word processing software: the crossover into page layout and desktop publishing.

Not so many years ago, the demand for a "what you see is what you get" monitor display was deemed to be satisfied if you could identify simple text effects such as bold and italics on the screen, and have visual control of line and page breaks.

Eventually, graphics-based screen modes made it possible to show different typefaces and even incorporate pictures, but fully-fledged multi-column page layouts with fine control over the positioning of the page elements and high-



quality output remained the province of an entirely different software category, desktop publisher. The processing power of your average personal computer just wasn't up to combining the functions of both in one package: DTP programs would be painfully slow at text editing, and word processors came to a near standstill once multiple columns, fonts and images were involved.

Given the steady advance in technology, however, it was only a matter of time until these restrictions would be overcome. The original ST was based on a Motorola 68000 chip running at 8MHz, but the STE doubled this speed to 16MHz and the Falcon and TT employ the much superior 68030 chip clocked at 16 and 32MHz respectively.

The cumbersome GDOS screen and printer output routines were replaced

with niftier alternatives such as NVDI and Atari's own vector-based SpeedoGDOS.

Only a few years ago, the average ST system had a couple of floppy disk drives and at best a full megabyte of RAM; fast hard disks and 2 or 4Mb of RAM are now much more common. Along with these developments, old barriers were gradually torn down and software developers became much more ambitious.

Papyrus represents the most advanced attempt so far to offer a word processor with a whole bundle of functions that used to be the preserve of DTP packages. Using the multiple master pages, Papyrus can handle the most complex publications including newsletters and magazines.

Text will flow around graphics and pictures can be anchored to a particular position relative to the text, so that any subsequent changes will make the illustrations move along with the text.

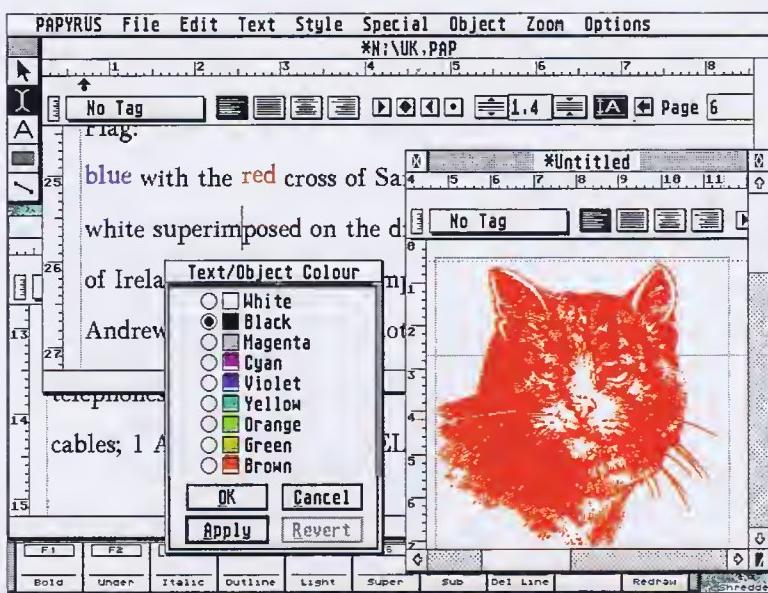
ZOOM FACTOR

Font sizes and leading can be controlled down to one-hundredth of a point. You can zoom in on any part of the page up to a zoom factor equivalent to the printer resolution (yes, just like Calamus and DA's Layout).

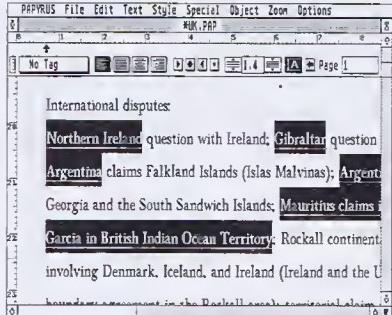
The program is extremely flexible in the variety of font formats it can handle. For high output resolutions and large point sizes, the new SpeedoGDOS vector

**A new German word processor with serious DTP ambitions is about to hit the market.
Günter Minnerup previews Papyrus**

Perfect



Multiple windows, a user-friendly interface and loads of powerful word processing and DTP features are the hallmarks of Papyrus. The colour support may not be quite up to professional publishing levels but a bit of spot colour could enliven your letters to the bank manager when you've got into the red again!



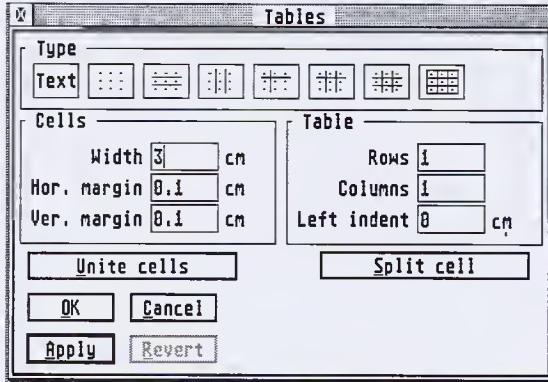
A truly unique feature is the ability to define multiple or non-coherent blocks which can be cut and pasted or have their font attributes modified just like the more familiar, single blocks. Clicking on **Mark** in the Font Panel will automatically define such a block from all text in the same font and point size.

format is obviously the preferred choice, but as the manual points out, for lower resolutions and point sizes, hand-crafted pixel fonts can be superior, so Papyrus also offers the use of ordinary GEM/GDOS fonts as well as Signum fonts.

The latter are not as well established in Britain as they are in Germany, where the Signum and Script word processors, which both use this format, are still going strong and literally hundreds of these fonts are freely available.

The traditional drawback of using bitmapped GDOS fonts is that they will only reproduce well in the sizes actually present on your system and can look very ugly when enlarged or reduced from these standard sizes.

Papyrus compensates for this as best it can by making an attempt at generating rescaled bitmaps rather than just enlarging the present one, and the results are quite respectable. Another trick up its sleeve is



to substitute printer fonts for screen fonts: a 12 point, 300dpi laser font, for example, has the same number of pixels as a 40 point screen font and will be used as such by the program.

Graphics handling is obviously central to any DTP pretensions and Papyrus will import both bitmap (IMG, Degas and a few others, but no TIFF) and vector (GEM) images.

These can be loaded into a picture preview window for examination before being placed into the current page in the document. Pictures are treated as objects and can be cropped, scaled and assigned one of eight spot colours.

ANCHORED

Like text objects, graphics objects can be rotated but only in steps of 90 degrees. The pictures can not only remain anchored to particular positions in the text – making it much easier to edit illustration-packed documents such as manuals – but will also have the text flowing around them, with user-definable spaces around the edges of the graphic. The

Setting tabular matter using proportional fonts and tabs can be a real nightmare, but Papyrus takes care of this through the settings in the Tables dialogue. There are also automatic or semi-automatic mathematical calculation and index generation features

import and export functions may not offer ready-made filters for other word processor formats, but there is very good support for the industry-standard Rich Text (RTF) format – indeed, the best I have seen on any Atari word processor.

This makes it a doddle to exchange files with PC and Mac as well as other Atari programs without losing text attributes like bold, italics and superscript. In my tests, even footnotes were correctly preserved.

For a graphics-based word processor, Papyrus is no slouch and certainly somewhat faster in operation than, for example, Calligrapher, the most DTP-like word processor for Atari computers up to now.

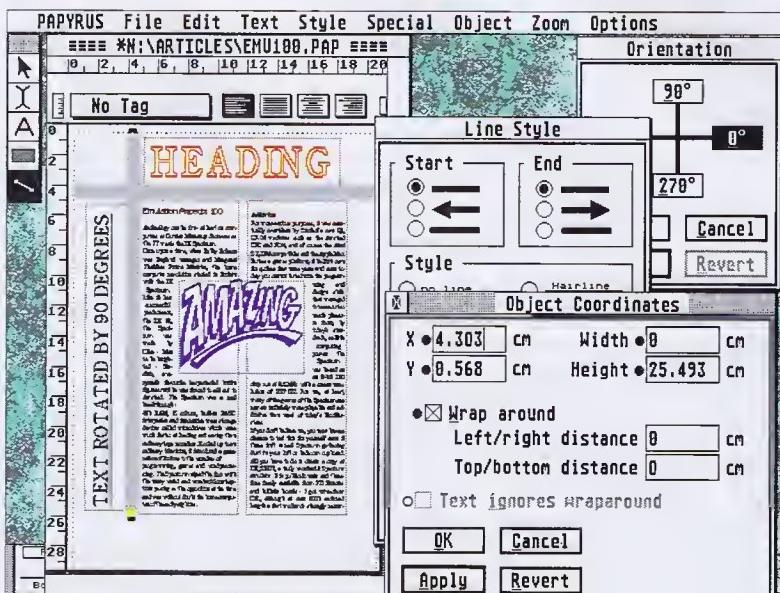
DECIDEDLY

But then it is only fair to point out that it does not quite measure up to the word processing power of Calligrapher, or indeed most other dedicated word processors with lesser DTP ambitions; the pre-release version examined for this preview lacked a spelling checker, for example.

There are also no macros and, perhaps most surprisingly, not even a simple word count facility. Similarly, on the DTP front, highly desirable and quite basic features such as guide lines and a grid are absent.

For many users these will be minor niggles, however, compared to the power and ease-of-use offered by Papyrus, and I am sure that HiSoft will move quickly to plug these gaps in the program's otherwise impressive armoury if sales takes off as they undoubtedly will. This new import certainly looks a winner to me.

on paper



Papyrus has all the basic tools required to create varied and flexible page layouts. The non-modal dialogues are in reality separate windows which can be kept in view while you are checking the effect of a particular setting

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

The best attempt yet at DTP-like word processing, but where's the spell checker?

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

Excellent user interface and very smooth in operation.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

Versatility at a reasonable price.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

Product: Papyrus

Supplier: HiSoft, The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5OE

Telephone: 0525 718181

Price: £129

Configuration: Any STE/TT/Falcon running in hi-res with 1Mb of RAM. Hard disk recommended with SpeedoGOOS

Besides the new technology and greater power which Atari's Falcon has injected into the Atari computer scene, another welcome fact is that it has been responsible for a sudden increase in art and graphics software for all Atari computers.

One of the first art packages for the Falcon was TruePaint, which worked on all Atari computers but also took full advantage of the Falcon's enhanced graphics features.

Hot on the heels of TruePaint comes TruelImage, providing the artists among you with some powerful and extremely fast image processing functions.

Although not quite ready for release yet, with a few bugs to iron out and the manual to be completed the version HiSoft sent for preview is pretty much complete and is looking decidedly tasty, thank you very much.

BALANCE

When it's finally ready, you will be able to get your hands on TruelImage for the princely sum of £59.95. For your money, you will get two program versions on the disk, one for 68000 machines (Atari 5T and STEs) and one for the 68030 machines (Falcon or TT).

Of course, the 68030 version will give suitably superior performance on appropriate machines compared to the 68000 version.

Judging the balance between performance and price of a package is a tricky pastime for any software developer, but HiSoft seem to have this particular skill mastered to a tee.

There are other image processors out there, some of which have features above and beyond what TruelImage offers. However, not many packages can have the user a comprehensive list of features at a price they can afford – TruePaint does just that. As is the case

with many quality image processing packages on various computers, TruelImage's interface includes a "floating" toolbox to complement the menu bar and multiple images are displayed in their own window.

This makes cutting and pasting between different images and quick selection of available tools a breeze, resulting in an efficient, smooth and easy to use working environment so essential in image processing.

One very important aspect of image processing packages are the number of picture formats supported. TruelImage scores extremely high in this area with its use of External File Manager (EFM) modules as first introduced in TruePaint.

These modules take care of interpreting the different picture formats which you may encounter when loading images from various sources.

The big advantage of EFMs are that should a new picture format emerge, it's simply a matter of knocking up a specific module to cater for it, effectively making TruelImage future-proof in this respect.



Multiple images can be loaded, memory permitting, with each image displayed in its own window

Darren Evans takes a sneak look at TruelImage, a soon to be released image processing package from HiSoft

Enhanced images

The preview version of TruelImage came with 18 EFMs in all, including modules for GIF, TARGA, TIFF, JPEG and Photo CD picture formats.

As with all image processors, a program is only as good as its range of processing functions on offer. Again, TruelImage scores highly in this area.

A quick trip to the Process menu brings up a veritable host of powerful functions to choose from including image enhancement filters and special effects.

All the usual functions, such as contrast, brightness and invert are in evidence, while the lower half of the Process menu contains the more exotic functions contained within sub-menus.

An added nicety with the contrast and

brightness functions is the inclusion of a Preview option, which lets you check out the effect your action will have before it is applied.

Many of the functions chosen are also very versatile in that a further dialogue box will ask the user to specify various settings for that function.

MANIPULATION

For example, choosing the Emboss function will bring up a box asking you to specify an angle, size and colour using slider bars to alter the default settings.

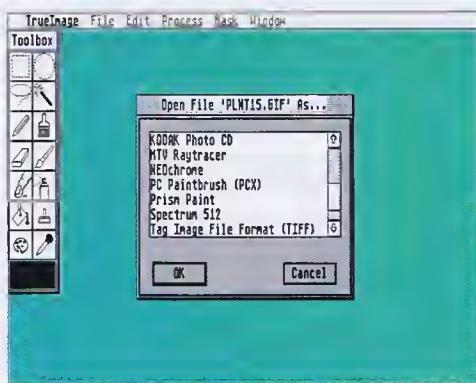
Obviously, such manipulation of images can be very time consuming depending on the size of the image and



Example of effects available with TruelImage, starting with this image before processing



Emboss gives a 3D look to the image, almost as if it's been stamped



The EFM picture format modules provide excellent support for the various image formats around at the moment

its palette. For instance, applying a Blur process to a image containing 32,000 or more colours will take longer than a 16-colour image. As mentioned before, you get two program versions when you buy Truelimage, one for 68000 machines (that's the bog standard ST and STEs) and one for the 68030 machines (Falcon and TT).

Of particular interest to Falcon owners is the fact that the DSP is used to impressive effect during processing. Most of the process functions bring up a progress bar which gives a visual indication of the time left until the process is complete, and when the DSP is being used this bar simply flies along compared to the same function being used on a non-DSP machine.

Two other particularly well implemented features which Truelimage offers are the Edit and Masking features.

ACCURACY

The Editing features include the standard Cut, Copy and Paste, which are useful for working with user defined parts of an image. You also have the ability to Flip, Rotate (in 90 degree increments), Rescale and Crop to a mask among others.

The Rescale function is very useful and lets you Rescale an image by size or resolution, which is ideal for DTP work. It is also very accurate and worked very well on a low res 320 x 200 image which it scaled up to 640 x 400.

The masking feature is particularly powerful. With it, you can specify parts of the image that are to be protected from certain effects or, to think of it another way, to isolate a part of the image which a process is to alter.

The masking features also allow you to specify and cut out irregular shapes



Mosaic essentially expands all the pixels to give a "de-rezzed" blocky look

from an image and paste them onto another. A particularly powerful masking tool is the magic wand which automatically calculates a colour boundary to define the area to be masked, negating the need to manually draw a mask around the outline of an irregular object.

It is also possible to alter the threshold level of the magic wand so that it works with a specific colour or range of colours.

In terms of performance, Truelimage worked admirably on my 4Mb Falcon. Although 4Mb should be fine for many users, it has to be remembered that Truelimage works in 24-bit internally and you will get out of memory problems when working with large files.

As yet, Truelimage does not feature virtual memory support, which I personally think would be worth any extra cost, but as HiSoft are renowned for their philosophy of listening to their users and continually improving their range of soft-

ware, I would think it won't be long before it appears in an upgraded version.

Although the manual was not available for this preview, HiSoft have a long established reputation for producing excellent documentation, complete with tutorial and reference sections for all their software products and Truelimage will no doubt be no exception.

In closing, it is difficult to give an overall rating to what is essentially an incomplete product, but if the currently implemented features and price are anything to go by, Truelimage will certainly appeal to a wide audience of both DTP and general artists alike.

Product: Truelimage
Supplier: HiSoft, The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5DE
Telephone: 0525 718181
Price: £59.95
Release date: Available soon

The competition

There are many other image processing packages for the Atari range of computers, all having their own strengths and weaknesses as well as price tags. Here are a few of them:

Chagall • CGS Computerbild

CGS are one of the most prolific companies in terms of high-end graphics packages and Chagall is one of their most powerful and recent additions to the area of image processing.

It's a 24-bit package which has a comprehensive range of functions and add-on modules which make it one of the most powerful packages around. Its multi-window, icon-driven interface is particularly excellent, as is its 8-bit masking feature.

It also has virtual memory support, meaning you can use your hard disk as extra memory. It works on both Falcon and STs with a graphics card.

Chagall's power comes at a price, in this case £199 compared to Truelimage's £59.95.

DA's Picture

Another high-end image processing package from CGS Computerbild, utilising the same excellent multi-window icon interface.

DA's Picture is from the same team that developed DA's Vector and DA's Vector Professional and you can be assured that it has a comprehensive range of features and functions. DA's Picture will set you back £149.

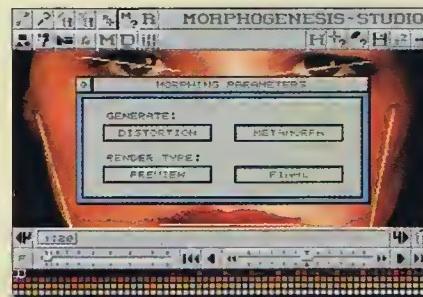


Studio Photo

This one's from Compo Software and is an easy-to-use package which is compatible with the Falcon and STs. It has a good range of functions though they are somewhat slow,

even on a Falcon.

One impressive inclusion to the package are the CD-ROM drivers for MultiTOS. Studio Photo costs £79.



ChromaStudio 24

Before you ask what happened to versions 1 to 23, the number 24 refers to 24 bit, which is what this promising package works with.

It's hard to classify this one; it's an art package, offering all the drawing tools for creating an image, it's also got an impressive morphing package built-in for creating morphing, as made famous in Terminator 2.

It also boasts compatibility with Exposé, a video digitiser from Titan Designs, enabling you to grab images directly from video. The ChromaStudio program is actually finished but is still undergoing final stages in the distribution area. Look out for it soon.

Gem View v3.02

If you are on a budget, you can still venture into the image processing arena with Gem View, an outstanding shareware picture viewer come image processor.

It's such a great shareware package that we gave it a two-page review in the April issue, where Andrew Wright gave it a big thumbs up in terms of features and value for money.

All good PD libraries should have it in stock and if you decide to register, it will cost a mere £18.

ATARI ST USER

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Atari Joystick

This is an unbeatable offer for all gamers - an Atari joystick for just £2.99.

It's ideal for anyone, but especially for those who would like a second stick ready as a spare for visiting friends. With easy access Fire buttons on both sides of its small case, this model is suitable for left and right-handed players and fits comfortably into the hand.

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Atari Robotics

Control battery-operated robots such as Lego from your ST with this powerful and easy-to-use package. It contains an interface card and software, both designed for use by people without electronics experience.

The manual takes users from the basics through to building sophisticated models, with the help of clear diagrams and examples.



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Trackball

Ever fancied a mouse alternative, but been put off by poor trackball designs? Well, we've found the answer - the Legend Ball.

This 320 dots per inch trackball has been ergonomically built, putting all controls within easy reach of your fingers and featuring a smooth platform on which to rest your palm.

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GREAT WAYS TO UPGRADE

External drive

An external floppy drive which plugs straight into the back of the ST can benefit every type of user - from games player to publisher.

Disk copying is faster and easier once a drive has been fitted, and there's no need for inconvenient disk swapping when using powerful software.

The advantages of owning a second drive - and what better way is there of expanding your system than choosing this bargain-priced but high quality device?

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This high resolution replacement for the chunky and sluggish Atari mouse is perfect for use alongside all your leisure and business applications.



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With more and more memory-hungry programs being launched for Atari computers, there's never been a better time to upgrade yours.

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We've put together options for all types of Atari enthusiast - and with the STFM boards you'll be able to extend the memory up to 4Mb of memory at a later date.

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STFM 4Mb	£129.99

lively presents

saving ways to stretch your ST's limits...

Midi Studio Master

This Midi sequencer - which previously sold for £99 - enables you to turn your ST into a fully-fledged music controller.



With this software and compatible synthesiser keyboard you can write, store and playback stunning compositions just like the professionals.

Its features include 100 track storage, 240 PPQ resolution, Midi standard file compatible, real-time mix-down via mouse, real-time scrolling arrange window and pipeline module system.

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Internal Drive

Imagine the advantages of upgrading a single-sided floppy disk drive to a double-sided version.



If you're still using the old style single-sided drive, then you'll have already found that most of the latest software doesn't work with your ST. Replace it with this internal model and you'll be able to run all programs, including your existing collection, and have double the storage capacity on every disk.

The drive is easy to fit but because official Atari drives are no longer available, some small alterations will be needed to the ST's case.

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TOS upgrade

Give your ST the extra features and improvements of the latest operating system but keep compatibility with all your existing programs.

With TOS 2.06 you'll be given your computer a brilliant new look, and have the ability to put frequently used folders and files onto the desktop for easy access.

Extra icons are available for folders and hard drives, keyboard shortcuts make control easier, the desktop's colour can be changed and GEM programs set to run automatically.

Its support for high density floppy drives is just another reason why this bargain upgrade is right for you. A fitting service is available.

**ONLY
£59.99**



Fitting and return delivery

We realise that many ST owners would love the power offered by extra memory or the latest operating system but are put off by the prospect of fiddling about inside the computer.

This is why we've teamed up with a leading Atari dealer who for a small extra charge will

be able to fit memory and TOS upgrades, and even arrange for your machine to be sent back.

If you choose this service please don't send your computer just yet - once we've received your order an Upgrade Centre representative will arrange a convenient appointment time.

UPGRADES ORDER FORM

Fill in this form and send it to Upgrade Centre, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

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The link between chocolate and astronomy is not an obvious one, unless you think of Galaxy or Mars bars. For David A Hardy, however, employment in the design office of Cadbury's in Bournville became the springboard for a successful career as a freelance writer and illustrator that revolves around the stars.

Like many children, David grew up with a fascination for mankind's final frontier, but unlike most, he developed this youthful interest into a vocation that has made him a star himself on the international science-fiction and astronomy scenes.

His first collaboration, with Patrick Moore, the famous astronomer and television personality, dates back to 1954, his pre-Cadbury days, when the then 18-year-old created the illustrations for one of Moore's books.

Many more such collaborations have followed. The Cadbury experience then added the commercial training without which the leap into freelance independence, made in 1965, might have been that much more hazardous.

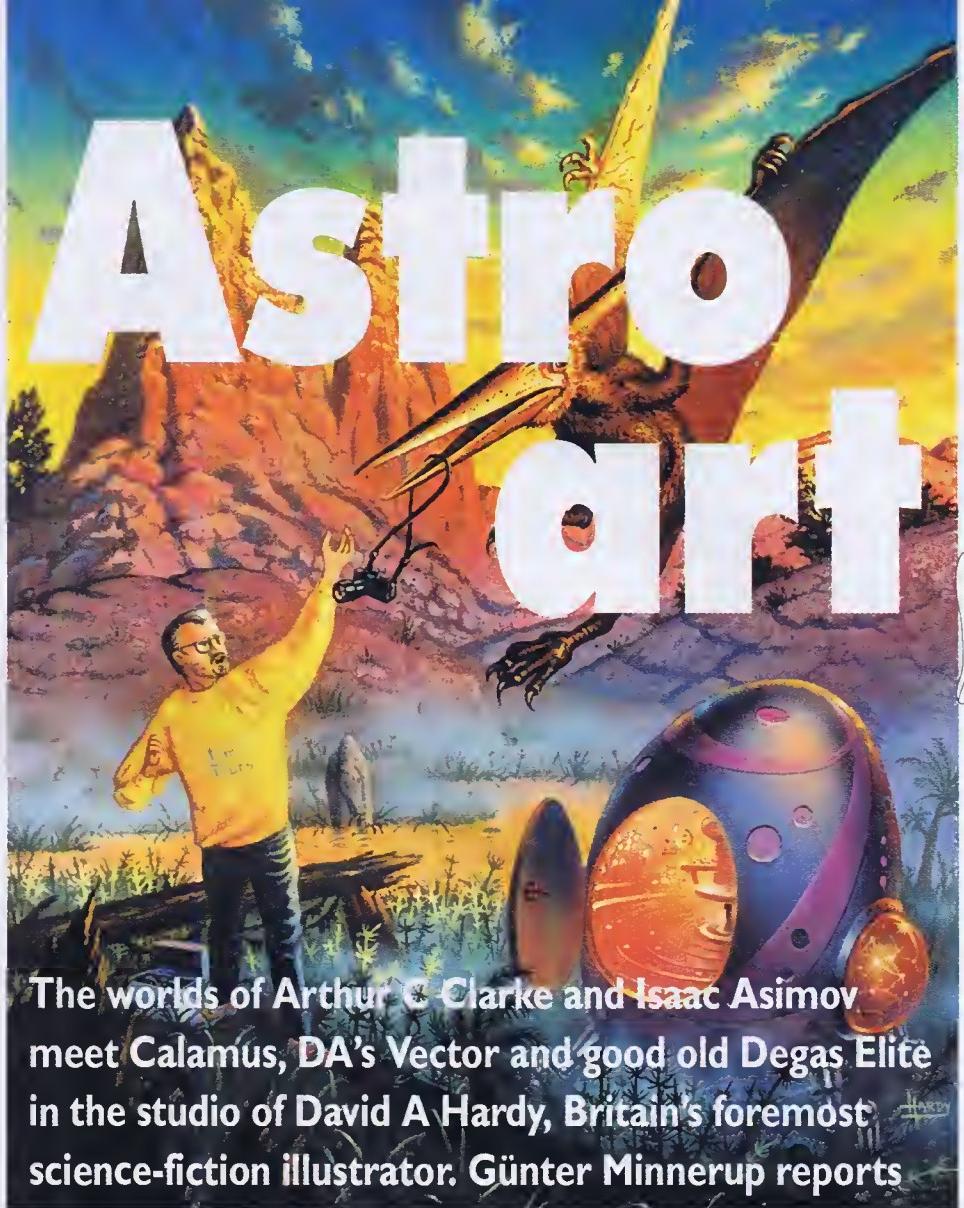
SCIENCE-FICTION

All kinds of real or imagined intergalactic sceneries and life-forms figure prominently in David A Hardy's work, much of it aimed at the science-fiction market.

Leading American SF magazines such as *Galaxy*, *Amazing*, *Analog* and *Fantasy and Science Fiction* regularly feature his award-winning covers, as do countless hardbacks and paperbacks of this genre. Household name authors Arthur C Clarke and Isaac Asimov own his pictures, and he has been voted Best European SF Graphic Artist.

But David Hardy's interest in space is not just confined to the fantastic and the fictional, it also has a more serious scientific side to it: If science-fiction leaves you cold, you are just as likely to find his illustrations on the pages of *New Scientist* or on the popular science shelves of your local library.

Indeed, not only his illustrations but his words too, for he has also authored a number of science books, including *Atlas of the Solar System*, *The Fires Within:*



The worlds of Arthur C Clarke and Isaac Asimov meet Calamus, DA's Vector and good old Degas Elite in the studio of David A Hardy, Britain's foremost science-fiction illustrator. Günter Minnerup reports

Volcanoes on Earth and Other Planets.

These are not cheap paperbacks, but lavishly illustrated, beautiful and glossy productions of the coffee-table type, with a broad appeal and extremely educational, scientific content.

Last but not least, there is the art itself: there have been David Hardy exhibitions in the London Planetarium and shows all over the world, and his work has featured in the prestigious US magazine *Step-by-Step Graphics*. Some of his fine

art prints have become best-sellers both here and in America. As European vice-president of the International Association for Astronomical Arts, he has recently compiled a stunning collection of the work of over 70 international space artists entitled *Visions of Space*.

Not being much of a science-fiction or astronomy aficionado, or a regular browser on the science shelves of my library, I might never have come across David Hardy or his work if it were not for my assignment to track down interesting professional users of Atari computers.

That is one of the pleasures of this job: you really meet some very unusual and fascinating people, very different from the common stereotypes of computer users as spotty games-playing adolescents or grey-suited business types.

Indeed, when I enter David's studio on the first floor of an unassuming semi in the leafier suburbs of Birmingham, there is not a computer in sight. The walls are covered by bookshelves crammed with scientific and SF literature, the remaining available space filled with choice samples of his work.

In the centre of the room you find the traditional workspace of the graphic designer, with pots of paint, collections of brushes, an easel and all the other paraphernalia of the graphic arts, the



David A Hardy touching up one of his space landscapes with the airbrush. He regularly uses a wide variety of techniques and materials, from acrylic to oil, but has recently developed a particular liking for chrome-colour, which is derived from the paints originally used by animators

SWITCHED ON



only visible concessions to modern technology being a large photocopier, a fax machine and an Optiskop enlarger hovering over the desk.

It is only when you climb up another flight of stairs that you enter the combined photographic studio/computer room. It is almost as though the two spheres of high technology and traditional craft have been consciously kept separate. Without previous experience



A new Falcon 030 has replaced a Mega ST as the artist's main computer workhorse. The 520ST in the background is used mainly for word processing and leisure purposes – there's an electronic keyboard hooked up to its Midi ports

of computers, David became one of the first ST owners in Britain way back in 1985 when Jack Tramiel launched the new machine under the famous "power without the price" slogan.

"I had been keeping an eye on developments in computer technology for some time, but the ST was the first affordable machine that could really do what I wanted it to do," he explains.

UP-TOOATE

The 520ST led to a Mega 4, and he is now the owner of Atari's latest machine, a 4Mb Falcon 030 with an external 85Mb SCSI hard drive, connected to a multi-sync colour monitor.

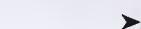
This up-to-date hardware runs some surprisingly veteran software, especially the now very long-in-the-tooth Degas Elite.

"I use it mainly for rough sketches before getting down to the actual painting," David explains, "and it's never been bettered for ease-of-use, especially when it comes to simple block operations."

A much more recent acquisition, DA's Vector, is used mainly to manipulate vector text for special effects and to vectorise bitmap images scanned in with his Epson GT-6000 flatbed scanner. The traced images are then usually imported into DTP program Calamus S, edited further and printed out on the Ricoh LP1200 laser.

Hidden deep inside many of his paintings are cut-out laser prints, cunningly disguised with liberal applications of airbrush paint, until they blend in perfectly with their surroundings. Another use for the scanner/Falcon/laser combo is the production of printed transparencies which serve as templates for the airbrush.

David is constantly experimenting with new techniques, new software and new



To the real world...

The freelance worker, being able to do his own thing in the privacy of his own home office or studio, answerable to no-one but himself and earning cash for his own bank account only, is the envy of most of us with our daily struggles commuting to a distant workplace and our dependency on the whims of an employer.

The other side of the coin, though, is the freelancer's regular confrontations with the Inland Revenue, and the constant struggle with paperwork. This, of course, is yet another area where the computers come in handy.

For David, the PFM Personal Finance Manager takes care of the sums, but I nearly choked on my biscuit when I heard that much of the word processing is still done with something called Haba Writer, one of the earliest and now long-forgotten products for the ST.

Then again, word processors are largely made redundant in David's working life by his enthusiasm for Calamus into which most of the correspondence is typed directly.

Nothing unusual about that, perhaps, since it allows the easy incorporation of designer letterheads, but David is the first author of a full-length novel – a science-fiction work entitled *Child of Two Worlds* – I have ever heard of to prefer the built-in Calamus text editor to a dedicated word processor for creative writing. It goes without saying that the publishers will receive a manuscript complete with cover design and full-page illustrations!





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Individual screens are designed using Degas and then linked to make stunning game backgrounds



The ST was the first affordable machine that could really do what I wanted it to do

CVs, Hardy Visual Communication offer a pretty comprehensive palette of services.

If you want a T-shirt with a company logo or even an intergalactic space wars scene, David Hardy will happily oblige too. Yet he also counts some of the biggest names in the corporate world among the clients for whom he has designed anything from promotional literature to 48-sheet street posters: Guinness, Meccas and Hewlett Packard, to name just a few.

And while we are into name dropping, we could add the record covers for Pink Floyd and the Moody Blues, or the production art for the film *The Never-ending Story*...

Finally, the inevitable question to each serious and professional Atari user: Given the current fashion for the Apple Macintosh and Windows PC platforms, is David Hardy contemplating a switch from Atari to one of these so-called industry-standard heavyweights? The answer is quite unequivocal.

"The Mac is rather nice, but given my existing investment in Atari hardware and software I'm unlikely to change in

potential applications for the Falcon. Having invested in copies of Studio Photo and Retouche, scanned photographic images are playing an increasing part in his design work, and the day may not be far away when the computer will at last be able to replace – for some jobs at least – the real airbrush.

David explains that the painting tools described as airbrushes in most existing graphics programs are really only pixel scatterers with little resemblance to the real thing, so he has put his own experience to constructive use and advised the developers of ChromaStudio, the stunning new Falcon art program, on the specifications for what promises to be the first true paintbrush tool on a personal computer.

ENTHUSIASM

David speaks of this software with enormous enthusiasm, as indeed he does of the potential offered by the exciting graphics abilities of the Falcon in general, so we may well see him move further into the direction of computer art, complementing rather than completely replacing his more traditional craft.

The move into computer technology has helped David spread out into several new areas of commercial work – a freelancer has to earn a living, and the more strings to his bow the better.

Good graphics are always in demand in the games publishing world, and many computer games are set in space scenarios, so it is not very surprising to find that David has also been heavily involved in this field, producing the graphics for the highly successful Kristal and the packaging artwork for, among others, Damocles and Mercenary.

These were done with Degas Elite, but Calamus too has found additional gainful employment in a page layout and graphic design bureau for small local businesses and societies: from copy-writing to letterheads, Yellow Pages adverts to



A combination of three Degas colour screens forms a wide panoramic view of one of the locations in the highly successful game Kristal

Swirls on film

Photography plays an important part in David Hardy's business: freelancers often have to send off their work on spec and can't, therefore, use the original artwork.

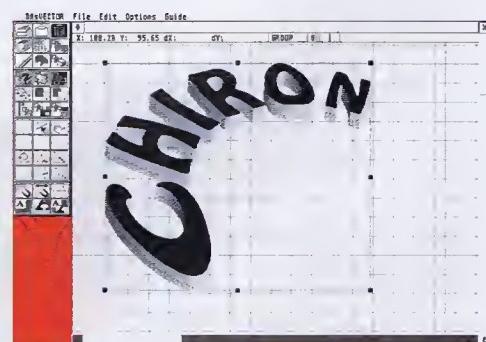
Instead, colour slides are sent, and a small photographic studio therefore shares David's upstairs room with the computers. A large collection of these slides – known as the Astro Art library – is instantly available to any publisher looking for space, science or fantasy motives from a well-established source.



the foreseeable future. The Falcon does everything I want from a computer."

It is not just a question of cost, he adds, but of hard-won experience and hard-learned skills – why start all over again when there are still so many powerful features waiting to be explored in the new crop of Atari software?

• Hardy Visual Communication are at 99 Southam Raad, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0AB. Tel 021-777 1802, fax 021-777 2792.



A frequent assignment for David A Hardy is the design of complete book covers. While most of the graphics are created by traditional methods, the typography is taken care of by Atari ST software – DA's Vector in this case. The finished title is printed and cut out to be pasted into the artwork

Many Atari ST users surely end up making music by accident. Seeing the strange Midi sockets on the side of the machine, and realising one day that they match those on a synthesizer bought for a member of the family a couple of Christmases ago and then tactfully stored under the stairs for most of the ensuing time, the connection is made, the dust blown off and the investigations commence.

Unfortunately, here is where the fun stops for many. Confused by oft-dropped names like Cubase (sounds like a maths lesson), and in a tangle with the apparent proliferation of wires, syncs and crochets required to get something, somewhere to at least bleep, the synth is back under the stairs, the strange-looking leads bought for the project with it.

The problem is that this whole computer music game is a notoriously hard one for the beginner to crack. What actually makes the music, the synthesizer or the computer? What's a sequencer? Does the computer control the synth or the other way around? Who the hell knows?

It's a sticky one, but one which Software Technology's new Break-thru 2 package attempts to tackle head-on.

The Manchester-based company have a history in Atari

music software, and this package is merely another member of a family line running through Sequencer One, Sequencer One Plus, the original Breakthru, and Breakthru 2's older twin, Breakthru 2 Plus, which is identical apart from coming with a nifty gadget to enable it to control humungously expensive and totally fantasy-world amounts of equipment. One for the pros...

And so back to our package. For those who do not know these things, Breakthru 2 is at heart a class set-up — a fact guaranteed before opening the box by its pedigree. Many of the features from Software Technology's programs

Sample sampling...

Many Atari users twig that their computers can also be used as effective samplers. Using variously priced 8-bit, 16-bit, mono, stereo, DMA and external add-ons and facilities, the Atari can be made to control a number of sounds alongside the music it tells your synthesizer to play.

It's out of the scope of this article to look properly at sampling, but the point is that, with the appropriate amount of time and investment depending upon the model of computer you own and the facilities you require, you can introduce "real" sounds - recorded by you with a microphone or stolen from your favourite CDs - and play them just like anything else using your keyboard.

Breakthru 2 fully supports such ventures, allowing you to weave such sounds into your music just as easily as any others. Or, if you've bought Breakthru 2 in preparation for when you can afford a synthesizer, you can use it straight away by relying exclusively on sampled sounds for your music.

Discover Software Technology's Breakthru 2 sequencer package and you could scarcely have a better way of becoming acquainted with the world of Atari Midi music. Phil Morse watches the video, loads the program and begs for the T-shirt!

are widely copied, and their reputation for usability envied.

But for the beginner, this package is now a really sensible choice, because more than ever it combines power with great ease-of-use. I will illustrate some of the ways the program does this shortly, because before the enthusiastic (but scared) newcomer need even load the two supplied disks or delve into the 80-odd page ring-bound manual, there is a video supplied which offers an unsurpassed route of entry into the musical maze, by explaining in detail, right from the very start, how to set up and use the program. You learn that the sequencer

face of a clarity of programming which shows in all aspects of the sequencer.

The overriding feel is of a program which tucks the fiddly bits away in menus, leaving the important bits big, bold and chunky, and very self-explanatory too.

Having installed it (onto hard drive if wished) the user is presented with a screen containing, at the bottom, a panel resembling (in concept if not in exact aesthetic styling) the controls of a tape player or video. These are used to fast forward, reverse, record over and play back the music being worked on. It's a simple concept to pick up. As a song is

Beginner's

is the essential piece of software which you run on the ST in order to store things played on the keyboard and play them back. You learn that the computer has nothing to do with actually making the music, but that it just tells your own synthesizer what to play.

In short, you learn the very basics of what computer music is, what it can achieve, how it is set up and where Breakthru fits in. It's a quality way to glean the basics.

The program itself does not disgrace the video's ease of use. It is easy to use because it has a clear and refreshing look, which in turn is merely the visible

quite a large and complex beast, it can be broken up in composition into bits – the introduction, the chorus and so on. These can be individually named in the track screen, which is one of many screens which can appear above the tape deck controls. Then it is much easier to jump to bits of a song for work.

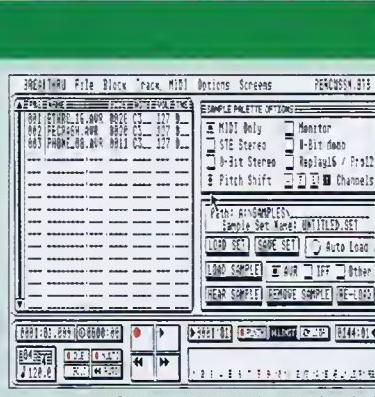
INSTRUMENTS

You might choose to actually work on your song in the Song Arranger screen. Here, the song is shown by displaying what instruments are playing and where on a large graph. You can copy large chunks of music and put them elsewhere. So if a song has three choruses, you can take all the chorus instrumentation and arrange it in the right places.

If you want a drum solo in the middle, you take your drum bits and slot them between the verse and the chorus, and so on. Such a screen offers particular benefits to producers of dance music, where every combination of every instrument playing in the music can easily be experimented with.

Samples are handled in the Sample Palette screen. Here is where your favourite noises are loaded from disk, and catalogued for use in the program. Breakthru 2 displays information regarding the sample name, volume, pitch and reference number, for calling from elsewhere in the program.

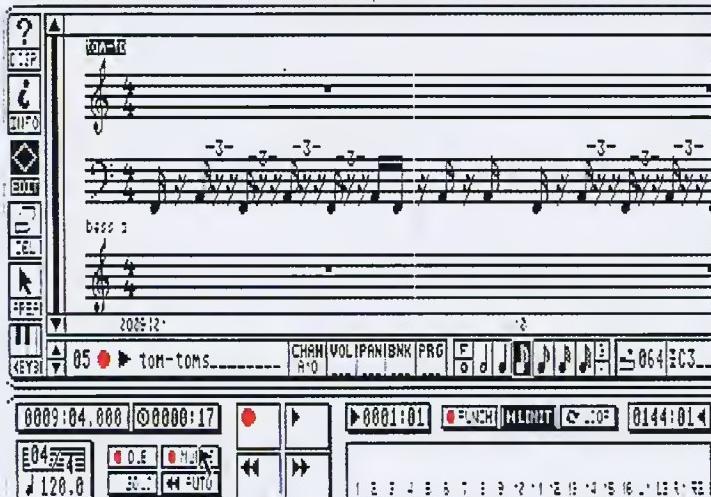
Possibly Breakthru 2's greatest inheritance from its ancestors can be found in the Step Editor, that part where notes



Once your samples are loaded
Breakthru 2 catalogues them

BREAKTHRU File Block Track MIDI Options Screens

PERCUSSN.BTS



Breakthru's music scoring screen, soon to be joined by a score printing utility

can be played with, added to or taken away from the music individually and painstakingly. Diamond Drag editing, as it's known, allows easy editing of the start point and end point of any note in the music, as well as its volume and pitch, all graphically and using just the

ing of one song after another with the minimum of fuss in-between times.

As is obvious, this program crams much truly varied and useful stuff into a deceptively simple-looking yet genuinely easy-to-use bundle, and is very successful at integrating these parts into a coherent whole.

It pitches itself in an area of the market where it has no real competition. At the bottom end are the PD trackers, samplers, rudimentary sequencers and the like which are at best well meaning but non-standard, and at worst, plain inferior (why are they free in the first place?).

POWERFUL

Just above them are the real budget sequencers with severe restrictions, while at the top end the professional giants are undeniably powerful but equally as daunting in both their pitch (to the studio professional) and their degree of complexity.

Breakthru 2 is an easy to use package by design, but it is also a serious attempt at a powerful musical tool. With its video manual as the jewel in a well-made crown, it will find friends in DJs wanting to turn musical bands wanting to produce their own sequenced backing tracks, small studios live events — anywhere where people want sequenced music quickly and with a minimum of fuss.

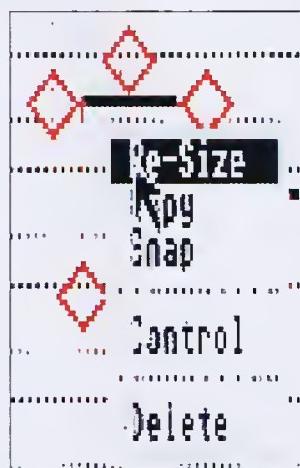
mouse. It's a genuinely simple way of fine-tuning notes, with the eyes spotting notes which are "out" just by what they look like, and the hand and ear putting them right simply and easily.

Score editing is multi-track and impressive. You can display your music in sheet (or score) form, which would be useful but for the fact that there seems to be no way of printing it (soon to be rectified, according to Software Technology's newsletter). But as sophisticated score-printing packages are very expensive and, I suppose by definition, extremely sophisticated, such a facility is beyond the reach and indeed the brief of Breakthru 2.

For entering sheet music for play by the computer it's an ideal system, and people such as music teachers would certainly find productive use for this screen.

Drums are quite often all on one Midi channel, which means that a lot of information is squashed in regarding all those little individual cymbals, bass and snare drums, bongos and so on. The Drum Editor screen addresses this by providing an easy-to-view and edit display of everything that goes on in the crowded drum bits, including naming the drums individually. Diamond Drag rears its welcome head here too.

Other screens include the Tempo Map area, where the speed a song moves at throughout can be graphed and edited, and the Jukebox screen, which allows the stacking of pre-written songs one after another to allow the easy live play-



The Diamond Drag system; dragging the top diamond alters the note's pitch; those on the left and right alter the start and end points of the note in the music; the bottom diamond alters the length of the note's stem, which indicates volume. The menu is accessed by clicking on the diamond immediately underneath the head of the note

I wasn't expecting that...

Full import and export of standard Midi files
Allowing you access to literally thousands of disks-worth of professionally arranged music from Tubular Bells to 2 Unlimited, all available from specialised outlets. Karaoke will never be the same again! On a more serious note, you'll be able to swap ideas with musicians who use different sequencers and even different computers to your own.

Load/save block

A wonderful practical tool for long-term composition. This allows you to save to disk any part played by any instrument. So if you write a good four-bar piano riff, compose a great bongo pattern or get that synth line just right, you can save it in a library of song parts, making it feasible to assemble a song from pre-written building blocks.

Full disk utilities

Allowing you to format disks, create folders and delete files and folders from disks in order to free up space — all the things you sometimes find yourself needing to do before saving a prized piece of work. A very sensible feature.

Complex Midi controls

These allow you to customise the behaviour of the program to suit the equipment you have plugged in, and the way you have it plugged in. They also accommodate passive or active Midi clock support and other such obscure but — just every now and then — essential system tweaks that need to be made to keep computer and keyboard talking nicely.



Some of Breakthru 2's complex Midi facilities in their own menu. Behind them is the Track screen

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Fully featured with nearly everything the bigger music packages have on offer.

Excellent

Good

Average

Bad

Appalling

EASE OF USE

Easy to use, relying the power unobtrusively waiting until its needed.

Excellent

Good

Average

Bad

Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

Not as cheap as some, but it's in a higher league than the budget wannabes.

Excellent

Good

Average

Bad

Appalling

Product: Breakthru v2
Supplier: Software Technology,
40 Princess Street,
Manchester M12 6DE
Telephone: 061-236 2515
Price: £149.95
Configuration: All STs/Falcon

New Age PDL

THE BEST FOR ST AND FALCON 030!

THE ATARI FALCON

At New Age PDL we are supporting the new Falcon 030 101%. We currently have a huge stock of Falcon specific and enhanced software all an High Density (1.44 meg) disks. We also fill these disks to capacity wherever possible to give you the best possible value for money. We now have a dedicated Falcon catalogue containing loads of free software including utilities, demos, music and a game. This catalogue is COMPLETELY FREE to new customers with your first order - just ask for it.

**ALL FALCON DISKS
£1.75 EACH**

FALCON ART & GRAPHICS PROGRAMS

- FALC 3 - Birdy 2 Animation (4 meg+), very cute! Cyrel Palette Master demo.
- FALC 8 - Fractal DSP, Fractal Zoomers, IFF, GIF, RAW & TGA viewers, Bit Camera for altering raster images, Speed of Light 2.6, F-Paint, Chagall demo, Slideshow.
- FALC 37 - Fractal Playtime, AS Lamp 3.00, Delmapaint, Tixi GIF, Binaris 2.0 + more!
- FALC 95 - Geotech - landscape generator, Neochrome, Photo Studio demo + more!
- FALC 98 - Chroe demo, Overlay demo 1.03 (zipped), Fixart demo 1.02.
- FALC 102 - Raystart demo 1.1, View XGA, IMG converter, Chagall Demo, Jpeg view 2.14
- FALC 110 - Vidal - easy to use TGA viewer, Rainbow demo 0.5 - Truecolour art package.
- FALC 117 - POV Raytracer 2 on 2 disks, zipped & expands to nearly 5 meg! £3.50.

FALCON PICTURES & ANIMATIONS

- FALC 23 - Targa Slideshow - 24-bit Truecolour pictures - photographic quality!
- FALC 31 - Temptation! The first disk of an EXCLUSIVE pack of JPEG pictures of gorgeous girls. Excellent quality pictures and the third disk pack contains no less than ninety pictures! Yes! 90! Disk 2 & 3 on FALC 32 & 33.
- FALC 34 - The Chippendales Auditions. This time disk of gorgeous blokes!
- FALC 38 - FL Animations: AS Lamp, Balloon, Bon, Glass, Hands, Bounce 2.
- FALC 39 - FL Animations: ASD5, Apple, B Ball, Bugs Bunny, Chubb, Cine, Tigercat
- FALC 78 - Moga Pictures - from Japanese films such as Akira, Dragon Ballz etc in JPEG format.
- FALC 85 - Starrek Pictures - JPEG's from all series.
- FALC 89 - Animal Pictures - the first of five disks of all sorts of mammals. (JPEGs).

FALCON DEMOS

- FALC 9 - Grotesque (Excellent!), Gouraud, Speeder, Plasma 30 & 50, Intel + more!
- FALC 11 - Morphing demo - requires 2 Meg memory + hard drive space - 3 more!
- FALC 96 - When Dreams Become Reality (RGB), Warum (RGB), Inconvex (RGB).
- FALC 97 - Fuji Ray animation [2 meg memory + HD space], Plastic Dreams - RGB/TV only.
- FALC 105 - Arrival Demo - Arrang Confid demo [4meg+], Cool demo, All RGB/TV only.
- FALC 106 - Falcon Flight Demo - real time zooming over fractal landscape + great music.
- FALC 107 - Crime by the DNT crew, Magnet by Alphatech, Bobbi - All RGB/TV only.
- FALC 111 - Lemans - digitised sequence of cars racing round track with music.
- FALC 113 - Marga demo [4meg+] - digitised pictures of a woman modelling a skimpy bikini!
- FALC 116 - Popo was blonde Runner [4meg+] new demo by EKO, very good. RGB/TV only.

FALCON MUSIC RELATED PROGRAMS

- FALC 7 - Fortune for creating cities, Protracker 2, TCB Tracker, Desktracker 1.11.
- FALC 17 - Winrec 1.35 (D2D), Digital 030 - new 8-track tracker program, unstable though.
- FALC 29 - Startrek Cities for Fortune, Dame - Digital Audio Multiplayering Editor.
- FALC 52 - System Audio Manager 1.1 - assign samples to events, Digitape 2 demo.
- FALC 68 - 40 Way samples for System Audio Manager.
- FALC 82 - Protracker 50Khz modules: Come & Get me, Puggy, Tripout, Hardcore etc.
- FALC 83 - As above: Freudon Dreams, Goodbye, Harry, Intro, Journal + 5 more.
- FALC 84 - As above: Watch Your Bass Spin, Boon And She Cums, Fin + 4 more.
- FALC 94 - Muzjazk - Huge sound player program. Zipped, expands to 2 meg.
- FALC 115 - Octalayer 0.8 - another 8-track tracker ported from the STE + docs & source code.

FALCON GAMES

- FALC 21 - Humans Demo disk 1. Zipped, expands to 3 Meg. Disk 2 on FALC 22.
- FALC 35 - Nethack 3.1.1 - 2 Meg memory - Brilliant dungeons and dragons game.
- FALC 103 - Oxyd [excellent!], Des Lasers et Des Hommes [3D shoot em up], Masters of Chaos [Dungeon Master clone], Tron, Ishor Editor, Mario Kart demo.
- FALC 104 - Spacoda (RGB) - space shoot em up, Madris (RGB) - crazy Tetris!, Vertical Mayhem (RGB) - nice version of Columns.
- FALC 112 - Mahjong II - German version of this classic tile game. Disk approx 1/2 full.

FALCON UTILITIES & APPLICATIONS

- FALC 2 - Falcon Boot 1.2, Backward 2.23 (ST emulator), New Depack, Text Files, Desk Copy, Deskpic 1.05, Sysinta, Multi Dialogue, DC Xtract 2.1, Revive, SpiritED 1.3.
- FALC 5 - C56K - Compiler, Chipmunk Basic 1.0, GTAR 1.1.1 - For MINT & Minix systems.
- FALC 10 - DSP66001 Assembler 1.1, ASM-CPX and DSP Bits - get programmes now!
- FALC 15 - 45 assorted MINT/MultIOS utilities + extended colour icons that run in Truecolour.
- FALC 20 - DSP Routines - about 1 megabyte of useful DSP routines.
- FALC 28 - X Control 1.2, Clock 2.0, Edison screen saver, Mini F5 0.55, Magic Boot, Genar 1.23 - Tape Backup, BMP Fix 2, File mods, Outside demo, PRG Flags.
- FALC 36 - DRE 3.1 Tawin 1.4, Lbs 2.22, Zoo 2.1, Zip 2.3, Gem Bench 3.25, Good Backup 1.13, Boot Init 1.1, Ecacy 1.5, Foomit, Shlbuf 1.3.
- FALC 77 - Emacs 3.11, Everest 1.5, KM Term, Atomik 3.5, X-Menu 1.3, Profile 1.43, Resizer [run RGB stuff on VGA monitor], Fullres 1.01, Swab, Dclock 1.0, Fuzzy Clock 1.14.
- FALC 109 - DMB icons - two large sets of replacement icons, Before Dawn screensaver 1.25
- FALC 114 - Multi-Dialogue 1.3, Master Browse 3.2 - excellent text file viewer, T-Code 6.0.

THE ATARI ST/STE

New Age PDL is now in its third year of business supplying top quality ST/E software. We now have over 1400 disks of some of the best PD, Shareware and Licenceware to suit all tastes. Just look through our advert to get an idea of the huge range that we carry. Our disk based catalogue describes every single program in detail, has a beginners section and is very easy to use - it's also COMPLETELY FREE to new customers! Just ask for it, there's no need to send any disks or SAE's. If you are an existing customer and you would like an update then send back your disk with a stamped SAE.

HIGH RESOLUTION GAMES

- GAME 1 - Anduril, Eliminator, Galaxy, Gilgalad, Mini Golf, Bubble, Runner, Space War, Tekris, Play Thing, Once A King.
- GAME 8 - Diamond [Boulderdash], Invaders, Macpan, Megaroids [Asteroids], Minefield, Missile, Murray, Solitaire, Spring.
- GAME 28 - Pyramid, Escape, Sokoban, Cube World, Battleships.
- GAME 30 - Air Traffic Control, Go-Board, Munchers, Pong, Puz Puz, Trivia, Go-Up.
- GAME 33 - Bolo [Excellent breakout game], Super Breakout, Baseball.
- GAME 34 - Pork 1 & 2 - sport York type adventure games, Enchanted Realms.
- GAME 38 - Net Hack v2.3, Scribble, Sherlock, Zarge, Checkers.
- GAME 39 - Eamon Fantasy Role Playing Kit, DOSST - dungeons and dragons.
- GAME 50 - Jeopardy, Clueso, Airline Manager, Locomotive, Bandworm, Heattris.
- GAME 76 - Hack & Slay Construction Set, Chess, Matchit, Crossword Editor 2.
- GAME 112 - Ritzky Construction Set, Roulette, Yatzy, Bockgammon, Poker, Pai Gow.
- GAME 125 - Cyclo - Dave's Poker, Deema, Crisbage, Tectic, Fast Poker.
- GAME 168 - Napoleon - a 'Risk' style game of war and strategy.
- GAME 185 - Oxyd 2 - the sequel to the brilliant Oxyd, much harder than the original.
- GAME 186 - Tekris - new Tekris type game.

COLOUR GAMES

- GAME 11 - A Question of Snooker, Pinball, Devastator, Roll n Nudge, Ranger.
- GAME 68 - Squidge, Fruit Machine, Pin Game, Rocket Ball.
- GAME 78 - Papered - a pop music game with an adult theme.
- GAME 81 - Battlescape, Blox - brilliant variation on the Tetris theme.
- GAME 83 - Grandad & the Honey Vest - superb animated adventure. 1 Meg+.
- GAME 104 - Blat! - A very nice version of Tetris, STE ONLY.
- GAME 105 - Infiltration - 3D game, Ozone, Atomik Robotik. Great shoot 'em up.
- GAME 117 - Fast Freddy - lovely platform game with superb graphics.
- GAME 121 - Darklite - great Isometric 3D war/strategy game similar to Hero Quest.
- GAME 123 - Top Trainer (horses), Anarchy Academy - wreak havoc in school, Baring.
- GAME 128 - Dungeon Lord - good Dungeon Master Clone, Arch Mage-shoot em up.
- GAME 131 - Glass Buttock of Tharg - save the land from the evil buttock! - 1 Meg+.
- GAME 132 - Psycho Pig - two disk platform game, very cute. £3.50.
- GAME 136 - Chaos 1/2 Meg version - classic spectrum game converted. 1 meg on GAME 146
- GAME 139 - Grandad II - the sequel to Game 83, comes on 2 disks 1 Meg+, £3.50.
- GAME 148 - Operation Blue Sunrise 3 - massive STAC adventure game. 1 Meg+.
- GAME 150 - Course Angler 1.02 - go tackle fishing on your ST!
- GAME 151 - Sim Pig - a brilliant pig farm simulation! Like Sim City & Sim Earth.
- GAME 153 - Wormhole - nice vertically scrolling shoot em up with slick graphics.
- GAME 155 - Three Realms of Suspicion - STAC adventure, Spaceball - like Ice Hockey.
- GAME 157 - B17 - bomb the buildings, F-16 - very good fight game, 8 missions.
- GAME 158 - Viking - shoot em up/strategy game. Demon - but like Xenon.
- GAME 163 - Theme Park Mystery, Combat - kill everything!, Sunmania.
- GAME 164 - The Obscure Naturalist - STACgraphic adventure 1 Meg, Dominoes, Slither.
- GAME 166 - Nirvana - platforms, Pure Logic, Maze, Chain Reaction - columns.
- GAME 169 - Megaline - four player Tron/Light Cycles, Insectoid, Cops n Robbers.
- GAME 170 - Magic Tomb [1meg+], Hyrule - great new 3D CK game.
- GAME 171 - Oxyd [1meg+] - superb puzzle/strategy game, Duck Dash
- GAME 172 - Baffin Brothers - the best Trivia game yet! Excellent presentation!
- GAME 173 - Lobby Invaders - uses hardware scrolling, stereo sound, STE only
- GAME 174 - Bludgeon 1.1a - fantasy role playing with full colour graphics
- GAME 175 - Trodionian's Creation - the sequel to Three Realms of Suspicion - STAC adventure
- GAME 176 - The Heavy Bush - Wild West game of gunfights, gambling etc, Spot It - puzzle.
- GAME 178 - Fatemaster - superb arcade adventure/dungeons and dragons
- GAME 179 - Argon, Out, Codename Bomb, Pyramid, Disk Hunt, Sirlet, Turbo, War Jeep, Plumber, Picker, Planet Man, Ubaut, Ypsilon - 13 games!
- GAME 180 - Asteroid, Sang 3, Battle, Bellum, Quiz, Blaster, Chunky, Europe, Explode, Fuzzball, Gemini, Invaders, Megaroids, Micro, Octopod, Othello, Pac Man, Plant, Rockfall, Tax, Tennis, Wall Street, Zappy
- GAME 181 - Mystic Well, Deep Lair, Football, Harris Goes Skiing, Haunted House, Invaders, Jumper, Room, Stoneage Deluxe, USA, Zym, Firestorm
- GAME 183 - Utopos 1.5 - very slick STE only DOS/Graf type game, Endurance - 3D game.
- GAME 187 - Towers - a great new Dungeon Master Clone - the best yet! 2 disks [1 MB+] £3.50.
- GAME 188 - Karate Champion, Hector and the Mutant Vampire Tomatoes - nice platform.
- GAME 189 - Premier Mahjong II - excellent version of this superb tile game, 60Hz only.
- GAME 190 - Cud Lee's Quest - platform game for kids, Mindmill - roleplaying fantasy game.
- GAME 191 - Quest for Knowledge - quiz type game set in a maze arena.
- GAME 192 - Walls of Illusion - yet another Dungeon Master Clone, good one though. 1 Meg+.
- GAME 193 - Rings of Power - shoot em up written with the SEUCK by Ken Reader.
- GAME 194 - World Fighting Championships - beat up opponents from all over the world - Survive! Another shoot em up by Ken Reader made with the SEUCK.

BUDGIE GAMES - £2.75 EACH

- BUGAM B3 - Cyberstorm, a very slick Defender game, really fast!
- BUGAM 89 - Horse Racing Simulator for 1 to 5 players. Buy/sell and bet!
- BUGAM 100 - Clod Hopper - lovely version of Manic Miner from the 8-bit days.
- BUGAM 104 - Jetpack - another faithful clone of a classic Spacey game.
- BUGAM 113 - Football Tactic - formerly a £20 release! Excellent!
- BUGAM 119 - Football Tactic - the Premier League 92/93 season.
- BUGAM 120 - Dungeon - traditional hack & slash game written in Talespin.
- BUGAM 121 - Super Scramble - take a trip to the B-bit days with this shoot 'em up
- BUGAM 122 - World Cup - the latest Football Management game from Budgie UK.

POWERFIST GAMES - £3.00 EACH

- POWER 1 - Snott 93 - previously commercial playable platform game. 1 Meg+ (512 on POWER 11)
- POWER 3 - Seven Galaxies - extremely slick shoot em up, one of the best so far.
- POWER 4 - Hundry 1066 - go back in time with some artillery for this classic!
- POWER 5 - Deluxe Nostrum - great flip screen arcade adventure. 1 meg+.
- POWER 8 - Power Cut - fly-around blast-em up with 25 power bases to destroy
- POWER 9 - Lord Ramsey in the 25th Century - great cartoon-style coper.
- POWER 13 - Location Universe 3D - escape four taxing levels of this brilliant 3D game.
- POWER 14 - Castle Capers - wonderful platform game set in a haunted castle.
- POWER 15 - 'Eas Lost His Marbles' - Huge adventure written in STAC.
- POWER 16 - Freaked Out 2 - the sequel to the great PD puzzle game.

ADR GAMES COMPILATIONS

- ADR are a group of coders who take popular PD games, compress them so that loads can be fitted onto one disk and then run easily at the push of a button from a menu.
- ADR 1 - Galaxian, Grav 2, Kubes, Plop, Spacewar, Mega Depack 2.12
 - ADR 2 - Mrs Munchie [1meg+], Utopos Preview [1meg STE], Night on the Town, Bloody Blade, Stomach, Snack Attack
 - ADR 3 - Balls, Violence, Kid Kong [1meg+], Happy Pac Worm, Lamatron
 - ADR 4 - Abominiball+, Floyd the Draid, Penguin, Super Match Maker, Fleet Street, Squish
 - ADR 5 - Cyberbeam, Rebound [1meg+], Hardcore [1meg+], Slug 2092, Grand Prix, Frogger
 - ADR 6 - Fader Master, Castle Capers, Speed Packer 3, Square Off
 - ADR 7 - Grandad [1meg+], Grandad 2 part 1, Critical Mass, Turbo
 - ADR 8 - Grandad 2 part 2 (both parts needed), Prensium+
 - ADR 9 - Rush 2, H-Max 2 [STE], Ozone 2, Blab Roar, Breakout+, Atomik 3.6
 - ADR 10 - Super Dark Pearl [1meg+], Operation Garfield [STE], Nirvana [trained], Pacmac [STE meg+], Teserae
 - ADR 11 - Glass Buttack of Thorh [1meg+], Invaders, Painter, Punt, Stomp

MEGA-GAMES PACK ONE!

No less than ten disks crammed to the brim with archived games (de-archiver and printed instructions supplied) to squeeze on an amazing 117 games covering board/puzzle/strategy/orcade/and adventure. For a full list ask your order or if not ordering, send a stomp. All should run on a colour system with 512k and be STE compatible! You will need about twenty disks to unarchive these disks onto AMAZING VALUE FOR MONEY.

117 GAMES - JUST £14.95!

ART & GRAPHICS

- ART 1 - A disk full of 23 miscellaneous utilities including viewgif 1.2.
- ART 51 - Crackat 1.36 - latest version of the best STI art package! 1 Meg+.
- ART 128 - Gemview 3.00 - new version of this superb viewer/converter.
- ART 157 - PAD 2.4 - English version of this high res drawing package 1 Meg+.
- ART 172 - Paintshop Plus 2.03 - A commercial quality drawing package.
- ART 180 - Paintpal - an ex-commercial painting package which was £15.00!
- ART 187-196 - Temptation! Volume 1 - the first pack in a whole new range of top quality pictures of tempting girls! Two versions [please state which!] for STE and one for STFM and one for STE which takes advantage of a 32,768 colour f... INNUSIVE to New Age PDL Ten crammed disks at just £15.00.
- ART 207 - Car Slideshow - brilliant Photocache pictures, Near Photographic STE Only
- ART 209 - Erotic Dreams slideshow - 1 - all pictures of Supermodel Cindy Crawford.
- ART 210 - Erotic Dreams slideshow 2 - another disk of Cindy Crawford pictures.
- ART 212/213 - POV Raytracer, the best raytracer around! 2 disks. £3.50.

DEMOS

- DEMO 339 - STAX Hat Keinan Plan Demo
- DEMO 336/337 - Traou'n Int Kai Bet Gret Ben Breman (2 disks) 1 Meg+ £3.50
- DEMO 335 - Reality Is A Lie demo - 1 meg+
- DEMO 328 - Ambience Demo By Chaos
- DEMO 325 - Perpetual Dawn Demo, 1 Meg+
- DEMO 323/324 - INTRAD MeGadem... 2 disks £3.50
- DEMO 320-322 - Froglies Over The Fence - Three disks! 1 Meg+ £5.00
- DEMO 314/315 - Coding So Far Demo, 2 disks £3.50
- DEMO 311-313 - Relapla demo - Three disks. STE Only! £5.00
- DEMO 310 - Ecstasy 1 - F-Factory 2 - brilliant STE demos
- DEMO 276 - E605 - TE only demo by Percy of Light.
- DEMO 274/275 - Dream... - latest megadem from the Wild Boys. £3.50.
- DEMO 270-272 - The Omiku Mi Megadem... takes up 3 disks! 1 Meg+ £5.00.
- DEMO 258 - Brutal Techno - Fantastic STE and 1 Meg only demo.
- DEMO 242 - Music Dream II - 9 superb 50Khz tunes by E.I. - STE only.

SOUNDTRACKER MUSIC

- TRAC 129 - Four, Prog funk, Cult 2, Cult 3, Federal Force, Rave 1
- TRAC 128 - Con, Short, House, Jewel, Spassong, Celtic 6, Rappit, A-Team, Sweet Dreams
- TRAC 127 - More Lemmings, Backpopped, Psychic 6, Bushfire, Donne 2, Ace Base, Echoing
- TRAC 126 - Scrabbled Mind, 1+World, Wyre 1, Hope Part 2, Lotus Turbo 2, H-Metal
- TRAC 125 - The Loader Final, Artificial, Finally I Play, S19, Piano TVA, Willow
- TRAC 124 - Donna, Hope Part 1, Meaty Man [1meg+], S19, Piano TVA, Willow
- TRAC 123 - Electric Revenge, Telephone, Flash 4, Roger XXX, The Credits, View to a Kill
- TRAC 122 - Klijie Poo Klijie, Oldmac, Absolute Muzak, Blenz Vector, Frog Mix, SNT Vector
- TRAC 121 - Enigma, Eve-o-War, G-Loc, Galaxy, Ewok

WORDPROCESSING (ANY RES)

- WORD 1 - ST Writer Elite, EDI Text, Zap ST, ST Page, Typist, Desk Accessories.
- WORD 2 - Mail Merger, Spell Check, Large Printer Maker, Count, Double, Convert.
- WORD 4 - First Word - tools, Grammar checker demo, Spell Binder, Text Filter.
- WORD 5 - Colamus Demo, no save function but you can print. High Res only.
- WORD 8 - DB Writer 1.4 - very slick wordprocessor with many features. 1 Meg+.
- WORD 9 - Colamus Support disk - loads of utilities for Colamus and font's etc.
- WORD 10 - Colamus Manual in the form of a CDK. [Disk not full].
- WORD 12 - Papyrus Office Demo 2.26 - good document processor with fonts etc. 'H' 1 Meg+.
- WORD 13 - Colamus S demo - fully functioning except save. 2 disks. £3.50. 'H' 1 Meg+.

This month, PD has been coming in to the offices like there's no tomorrow - graphics, demos, music, games and an assortment of other genres have appeared in the last couple of weeks.

Keep sending those titles in - the more diverse and off the wall, the better.

Lobotomy Invaders from a Small Bedroom

Produced by: Slaytan's Cult

Available from: Floppyshop

Disk No GAM 3193c

I am always asking for titles that are off the wall and out of the norm. While this game is simply a scrolling souped-up Space Invaders, the presentation and sound that accompanies Lobotomy is certainly odd enough to be classed as offbeat.

The game's premise is simple - move the centred cursor round the scrolling screen and shoot the rows of aliens that bounce all over it. Clear one level and you'll move on to the next. That's it...

Sounds perhaps a little repetitive and mindless? Yes, it is and fortunately, it's also strangely addictive, pulling on the old perseverance strings to have just one more go.

Graphics are efficient, if a little unexciting (some of them look like they've been lifted straight out of Wizball) but the sound is very good - samples of speech and music regularly surface from the speakers of the monitor, constantly adding an extra touch of adrenalin to the proceedings.

The scrolling deserves a special mention and again, like Utopos, shows what the STE can do when programmed properly.

With all this in mind, the small point about repetitive gameplay really doesn't amount to much considering the rather small price tag, and there's enough in it to make you come back for more.



Shoot the invaders and take plenty of sea sickness pills for the later stages

PUBLIC SECTOR

Adam Phillips dips his hand in the honey pot of the industry's underbelly on the search for software par excellence in the public domain

Zuffers

Programmed by: Terence Stuart Pearson

Available from: Caledonia PDL

Disk No STE-62

Mensa was created for people with high IQs, Zuffers was created for the aforementioned society's members. Similar in principle to Rush 2, the player is presented with a logic maze where smiley balls must be moved round and placed in holes. The main problem-solving aspect is that the balls can only stop moving when they reach a wall or another ball.

This guarantees cursing, swearing and threats of grievous technological harm as you experiment to try and get all the balls into their positions.

Add a time limit and some good



Guide the smiley faces to their correct positions, then realise you did it all wrong and start again...

dance tunes and Zuffers turns into an addictive, frustrating and in-at-the-deep-end-from-the-word-'Go!' experience. Slick stuff indeed.

Marcel

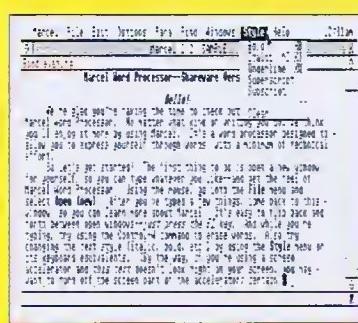
Programmed by: Marcel Software

Available from: Goodmans International Disk No GD2198

There hasn't been a new PD word processor on the public scene for a while now but this has fortunately changed with the arrival of Marcel, a comprehensive and easy-to-use program to help with people's wordy ways.

Like many titles found in the public domain, Marcel stands up admirably against the commercial competition, boasting a fine array of differing and useful features, from the simple and obvious necessities such as bold, italics and cut and paste facilities to paragraph manipulation and extensive printing options for that final, all-important touch.

With its clear layout and easy-to-read text, this is a useful and productive package for any budding novelists who wish to save themselves some money.



A comprehensive word processor packing a healthy number of features for your money

Falcon PD

Jaguar Demo
Produced by: PB Diskmag
Available from: Goodmans International
Disk No GF67

The Jaguar is looking more and more like it will be released at the beginning of next year. Despite this small setback, it's still possible to lay your hand on the beast through grey import.

However, if cash isn't forthcoming at present and you're a little sick and tired of those small grabs found in magazines, here for your delight is a selection of stills from some of the latest Jag titles.

Featured are Raiden, Evolution Dino Dudes, Trevor McFurr, Alien

vs Predator (three great stills from a game that's already being hailed as a classic and no-one's even played it thoroughly yet) and others.

There are over a dozen images, some of a high standard, others looking a little grainy as if being lifted from a magazine and then blown up. None of this will matter of course if you're an avid Jaguar fan in the making.

As a bonus on the disk, an extra program, Geotech is included – a simple fractal generator that draws randomly constructed landscapes featuring mountains, hills and sea. The end result can be viewed from different angles, giving a clear image that looks like an ideal place to live.

An interesting addition to the growing ranks of Falcon PD, the disk should find a place on the shelves of most owners of this powerful but underrated machine.

Wuzzlers

Programmed by: DA Brumleve
Available from: Merlin PD Disk No MPD 1793

Kids' stuff has to have two vital elements in order to make it succeed in the hands of young players. The package needs to be fun but simple and secondly, it's usually up to the adult to teach the child how to use it, so the program needs to be interesting for them as well.

Wuzzlers is an ideal example of this formula used well. In a variant on Hangman meets Catchphrase, that annoyingly presented TV show ("five seconds, here we go"), the player is confronted with a picture that is covered from head to toe by a series of squares.

Only one part is visible at the beginning and, like in Hangman, the user must guess a letter contained in the word of the object pictured.

If you make a mistake, another square is removed to give you better idea of the image. Once the picture is completely uncovered, it's game over and back to the beginning to try again.

There are well over 20 Wuzzlers to choose from and while it's not difficult for a grown-up, it'll be a satisfying challenge for youngsters. If the pictures do become repetitive, there is also a do-it-yourself Wuzzle creator so that images can be created and loaded in to the game. Couple this with an already fun package and you have a winner on your hands. Recommended.



Guess the word without uncovering the picture fully to move on to the next level in Wuzzlers...

The BBS Directory

Programmed by: Mark Westguard
Available from: Goodmans International
Disk No GD2181

If you've been tempted by the amount of bulletin boards available at your finger tips but have never wanted to spend the cash hunting all of them out, then BBS Directory can help you to discover some of the boards on offer.

Professionally produced with an attractive user interface and title screen, you're presented with an image of the UK. Clicking on the options enables you to access different functions, such as search for bulletin boards in a certain area which is then listed in a window for your perusal.

Also on the disk is Pool Manager by John Fermor that helps the user to keep track of matches and their results, giving an accurate rundown of the current league.

Even options for postponed matches and team withdrawal are taken into account so if you fancy your chances as a pool winner then you can do yourself no harm by investing in this package.



Bulletin boards are on the increase so what could be more handy than a directory listing some of them?

Utopos

Programmed by: Aggression
Available from: Merlin PD
Disk No MPD 1862

It's one of perks of the job when an inconspicuous disk arrives in a Jiffy bag and on booting up turns out to be one of the best games yet seen on the ST.

Featuring glossy, smooth scrolling and polished graphics, Utopos does the STE proud. Mixing Thrust-style gravity antics with a frenzied shoot-'em-up between two play-

ers, each user must guide their ship between the craggy stalactites and stalagmites of a cavern with the sole mission of destroying each other.

Change weapon configurations and arm yourself with missiles to be used on the opposition with devastating effect.

The game can produce a competitive atmosphere as one ship hides from the other or backs out by sitting on its landing pad constantly, refuelling and boosting its shields in the process.

With the plush graphics and addictive gameplay, Utopos is a must for all STE owners.



Steer clear of the craggy walls, hunt the human enemy down and blast the pulp out of them

Retrospect

Last month, *From Picts to Parliament pt3* was reviewed and one of the criticisms made was that there was no way of slowing down the slideshow to read the information at leisure.

Since then, the author, Evelyn Mills, has been in contact to state that the show can be sped up or slowed down using the function keys and has expressed anger at the review's oversight.

While I apologise for any inconvenience caused, the title featured no instructions about this particular facility which was, therefore, overlooked.

So, to all programmers and PD houses, please include full instructions if you want your program to be fully reviewed. If not, this kind of misunderstanding can happen.

Laser for Men

Programmed by: A Karine

Available from: Goodman International
Disk No GF65

At last, another game for the Falcon. This time, instead of a Tetris clone, the player is presented with a first person perspective shoot-'em-up.

The gameplay revolves around blowing the hell out of all of the enemy with your weapon while trying to keep as many of your own squad as alive as possible.

The scrolling is unsmooth but there is a less detailed version that can be selected. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of difficulty lining up the shot on the foe due to the jerkiness of the screen update.

Running around the maze is fun, though, and shows that the Falcon can do this sort of thing better than the Amiga 1200, so that can't be a bad thing.

The graphics are relatively good even if the enemy and friendlies look like heads stuck on top of a large cardboard box. If you've seen Doom on a PC and wanted a slice of the action then this will go some way to feeding that hunger... but don't expect too much.

There's also a demo of a forthcoming PD game, Mini F1, that nearly made my jaw drop to the floor when I saw the track intro screen - Super Mario Kart on the Falcon!

But alas, it soon cleared to be replaced with an overhead racer.

It's obviously hard to say what the title will eventually be like but it's good to see that there are games making their way onto the software-starved screens of the big bird owner.



Run around a maze, blasting the foe to pieces in this Doom-inspired game of destruction

Attention all PD libraries

If you wish to feature in *Atari ST User*, just send any of your files which you feel worthy of review to: Public Sector, *Atari ST User*, Europress Enterprise, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

Please include a list of the contents of each disk detailing the program name/s and what they are. This ensures quick assessment and inclusion into the magazine. If you are a shareware author, send in your latest creation along with a list of libraries who will be distributing your program/s thereby achieving maximum publicity.

Runecaster

Programmed by: Andy Norfolk

Available from: Goodmans International Disk No GD2193

Fate's a funny old thing - some people swear that it cannot be changed and that it's predetermined - all you can do is sit back and enjoy the trip. Others, like the author of this particular package, believe that while it does lay a path for the future, it can be changed at any point by the individual.

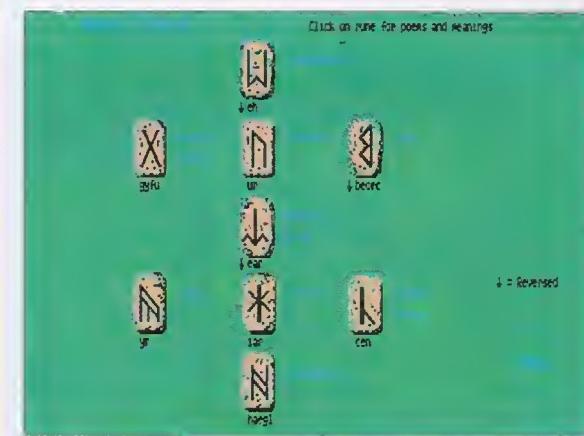
With the latter attitude in mind, the program can aid the user (if you believe in this method) in taking a glimpse at a possible future through a variety of methods.

Readings can be made from a single rune and, for the more curious, the program also includes a nine-stone set-up. The process is to simply think of a subject/question that you want to have advice on and the stones will reply accordingly. The author clearly states that these are just his interpretations on the runes' meanings and are not the definitive explanations.

Another interesting and original feature are rune poems based on ancient English, Norse and Icelandic culture. These cover various aspects of life and are interesting reading material.

Runecaster is a fresh and well-produced program that, while not covering a subject everybody believes in, is still a worth a look.

Take a glimpse at a possible future in *Runecaster*



KaosDesk

Programmed by: Andrens Kromike

Available from: Floppyshop
Disk No UTL 4270

The Atari ST desktop is not a very efficient or valuable one. Little nuisances turn into mountains of misery after rearing their ugly heads for the hundredth time.

KaosDesk is an alternative desktop for the ST, offering a host of powerful features over its Atari counterpart. Take, for example, when you have a program that you use regularly and want to store it on the desktop for easy access. This can't be done with GEM but with *Kaos* it can.

The package also boasts a host of other features including a large selection of new icons, an icon editor to create your own and a highly useful command interpreter where, like with the Commodore Amiga and PC, instructions can be typed in to perform certain tasks.

The only utility I couldn't use was the desk driver because, according to the program, my monitor wasn't "decent" enough - it would have been more useful to tell me why it wasn't up to scratch instead of leaving me in the dark.

Despite this one little niggle, *KaosDesk* offers a viable and hard disk-installable alternative to the frayed around the edges GEM system and is worth real consideration for any user who takes their computing seriously.

Lay your hands on me...

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Goodman International

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Merlin PD

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GM 027:	Monopoly	GM 124:	Klingon War (Star Trek)
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GEM - View 3 - The Ultimate Graphic Conversion Utility

After lengthy correspondence with Dieter Fiebelkorn, author of GEM-View, Floppyshop are now the official UK distributor for the unregistered version of the new modular GEM-View 3. It is the most comprehensive picture conversion utility available, reading around 40 different file formats from the ST, Amiga, Macintosh, PC, Sun and others. Pictures may be saved in IMG, ESM, GIF, IFF, BMP, TGA or TIFF formats. The good news for UK users is that GEM-View may now be registered in the UK. The latest unregistered version of GEM-View (presently v3.02) will always be available directly from Floppyshop. GEM-View 3 is on ART.3485 and is at a special price of £2.00 or £2.50 including a copy of our catalogue (please state ST or Falcon).

Family Roots

Family Roots is an invaluable aid to both professional and amateur genealogists. It is designed around an integrated workbench which allows you to create your family tree graphically on the screen by linking directly between the individuals. What the Press have said about Family Roots: "Certainly more than you'll ever need, unless you manage to trace your relatives back to Fred and Wilma Flintstone" - Atari ST User. "All in all, the best genealogy program available for the ST and well worth the money if you are considering tracing your family" - ST Format. Family Roots costs ONLY £24.95 (demo disk £1.00). UK postage free, please add £1.50 for Europe or £3.00 for rest of World.

Easy Text Professional Vector

This is an easy to use fully featured Desktop Publishing package for the Atari ST/E, TT & Falcon. It lets you create your own newsletters, brochures, business stationery, notices etc. It produces truly professional results with virtually all printers and comes complete with a 134 page fully illustrated manual. Easy Text Pro Vector requires at least 2 meg of memory and a hard drive or 2.5 meg of memory if you don't have a hard drive. SpeedoGDOS is also required but is NOT supplied. Easy Text Pro Vector costs ONLY £35.95. If you don't have SpeedoGDOS, why not get Easy Text Pro instead for ONLY £29.95. It is almost identical to the Vector version, except that it runs on a 1 meg machine and uses standard GDOS fonts (a number of which are included) instead. Overseas customers please add £2 Europe or £4 Rest of World, for either product.

The Beginners Guide To STOS Basic

This complete programming course for the Atari ST/STE comprises of a 618 page manual and 2 DS/DD disks. It introduces the reader to STOS Basic and takes the newcomer from basic principles through to the development of complete programs. It includes 190 programming examples and guides you through the creation of games, a complete art package, various educational packages and numerous business utilities. The Beginners Guide To STOS Basic costs £29.95 + P&P (UK £3, Europe & Eire £5, Rest Of World £10). COURSE DOES NOT INCLUDE STOS BASIC.

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Changing prices

I am one of your older readers in both senses of the word. I am 74 years old and I have taken your magazine from issue number one.

However, things have changed now due to the action of one of your advertisers. I have cancelled my order at the newsagent for all three Atari magazines.

Last Friday I rang a computer dealer advertised in the magazine to see if they had a 2Mb STE in stock, and they said they had.

As I had already got a machine on order from another firm I said that I would ring back shortly after I had checked about the other machine.

My original supplier had not got a STE available and so I cancelled my order and rang the other dealer again.

The STE was advertised in your magazine at £269 but the salesman said the price was £299.

I protested as my understanding was that if goods were advertised at a price they should be available at that price.

However, a Trading Standards officer said that providing the firm had told me that the price had gone up before I agreed to buy they were within their rights.

In actual fact this means that as you require the copy two or three weeks in advance of production, the price of every single item could be out of date before we receive our magazine.

I am sorry that things have ended this way as you are going to lose over £40 a year, and my newsagent will lose through no fault of his.

Mr H Morriott, Worksop

As you point out yourself Mr Morriott, we produce the magazine several weeks before it hits the news-stand, and this means a few prices can change by the time you read them.

It's never done deliberately - to my knowledge. For example, last summer memory prices soared following disasters at manufacturing plants in the Far East.

ronic buying forced prices up and these extra costs had to be passed on to end users, although the magazine is sold at the

Got anything to say to the ST community?

Then this is your soapbox

Write Now

time listed old prices. You've been buying the magazine for many years and never had reason to complain about the advertising system before, which just goes to show how infrequent this problem is.

Can't be found

I find it is now becoming increasingly difficult to get your magazine off the shelf of the newsagent.

Don't blame it on the agent. It must rest on your shoulders for forcing distributors to make it an assured sale. At over £3 no agent is going to stock the title if it can't be sold.

Which brings me on to another point. Are you doing this deliberately so as to find the excuse not to print any more *Atari ST User*s?

If so tell the public you are going to withdraw it from the shelf with good notice and you will keep many a good customer, myself included.

Before you go harping on about taking it on order or subscription, I am not going to buy a magazine unless I consider it value for money.

G Holdstock, Wotton-U-Edge

You hit the nail right on the head when you

*said it's becoming harder to find *Atari ST User* because newsagents won't take it unless they're sure of a sale.*

You don't seem to appreciate that in order to stay in publication we too need to make a profit, and if magazines are returned unsold then our money is wasted.

It is obvious that distributing the title on a sole-or-return basis would give a circulation rise but the move could mean burning as many copies as we sell.

However, we do have a slightly different sole arrangement with some outlets, and recommend that readers try their local WH Smith if they have difficulty finding any issue.

There are no plans to close the magazine, and why on earth would we want to find an excuse to do so?

Looking for STFM

Last year Atari announced that the 520STFM would be put back into production and they would sell about 150,000 of them by the end of December.

Since then I have not seen them in my local computer shop or advertised in the ST magazines. Did they ever go on sale and, if so, are they still available?

T Horper, King's Lynn

SDL apparently took the machine for trade distribution, and it was sold to the public through independent dealers - though 150,000 seems to be a highly inflated figure.

For the last few months, however, there have been very few STFs available of any type, although Compo Software (04873 582) still have STFMs in stock.

There are industry rumours that Atari might be about to go back into production with at least one model, although no-one at Atari has been able to say anything concrete on this.

Playing with Falcon

Further to the debate on Falcon vs ST coverage in your magazine, I am lucky enough to live in a house with an ST, a TT and a Falcon.

However, my ST is a very old and slow machine, and therefore I normally prefer to play any games which I buy on either the TT or Falcon fitted with hard drives.

However, when faced by the choice of which games to buy I am often at a loss, simply because there is seldom any information on compatibility, either on packaging or in game reviews.

I can understand that it would take extra time to check compatibility with either TTs or Falcons, but it would be helpful.

On the plus side, MicroProse now list TT compatibility on their games boxes - but many firms do not. Nor when contact by phone do they know if their products are compatible.

When I was thinking of buying Frontier: Elite 2, I contacted Gametek who thought the game was Falcon compatible but weren't sure. It is Falcon compatible, but not TT.

I hope that you will be able to list Falcon/TT compatibility in the future in your game reviews.

Miss Fiona Clark, Manchester

**£25
Prize
Letter**

We've been considering adding a Falcon compatibility comment with game reviews for some time, and it appears that there are now enough owners of the computer to make it worthwhile.

So from next month's issue you'll find the information listed at the end of each game review.

Waiting to hear from you...

To join the ST chat show drop a line to The Editor, Write Now, *Atari ST User*, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Being able to recognise shapes and colours is vital – the world is made up of them, and the ability to remember which shape and colour is associated with what kind of item ranks pretty highly as far as basic human intelligence is concerned.

Of course, children learn shape and colour recognition naturally, as part of their everyday interaction with people and surroundings.

However, the ST is an ideal means of sharpening this awareness, and preparing children for some of the more complicated feats of recognition yet to come, like sorting complex shapes, and reading.

Most of the programs reviewed here are parts of bigger packages which teach a range of skills. They have been chosen because each represents a different way of teaching colour and shape recognition.

None of the packages mentioned here costs more than £25, and some – those available from PD/shareware libraries – are less than £2, so there's something to suit all pockets.

All of the programs will run on a colour monitor or colour TV set. Although younger children can be almost alarmingly smart at operating the ST, make sure you spend some time with them to ensure they understand exactly what is required of them for each activity.

Discussion about why they made a particular choice, and how what they are doing can be related to real-life experience, is very worthwhile, but be careful not to destroy the fun aspect of the games with too much theorising. Learning should be enjoyable, and the programs reviewed here will certainly provide children with hours of fun.

Restrictions on space mean we cannot look at every program that teaches shapes and colours, so we've chosen to highlight some of the better ones. Do some research of your own before deciding what's right for your children – but don't leave it too long.

Blobs

Age range: 4-8

Prisma Software • £19.99

Part of the Which? Where? What? package in the Kids' Academy range. Children who join Pepe mouse for some colourful fun trying to place the next in a series, based on shape and colour recognition, are in for some genuine entertainment as well as some sharpening of their recognition skills.

There are two Blobs games – the first deals with colours only, so the one we're really concerned with here is the second, which features colours and shapes together.

One of three levels of difficulty is chosen at the start, although this can be changed during the game by pressing F1, F2 or F3.

The child can build a spaceship or a skyscraper, hang clothes on a washing line or put books in a bookcase. Blobs teaches recognition not only of shapes and colours, but of repeating patterns. A pattern can be very simple, with only one or two shapes and colours used, or quite complex, using many colours and shapes.

Practical experience proved that a child has to think very carefully before deciding what shape to choose next, and what colour it should be. The fun aspects include moving Pepe up and down a ladder to choose a shape, his antics when you place the right shape and colour, and the animated scenes that result when all shapes and colours have been correctly chosen and the picture is completed.

The graphics are very good and the music consists of nursery rhyme tunes.

Graphics	8	Very good
Sound	7	Good
Entertainment	8	Very good
Educational value	8	Very good



It'll all come out in the wash. In the blobs game shape, colour and pattern recognition are tested

Shape for keen young minds



If your children help you put away your supermarket shopping, they'll soon get the hang of this

Mice in the kitchen! Don't worry, they're friendly ones who respond rather pleasantly when you show them you can place your shopping items in the right places

Shopping Basket

Age range: 6-8
Prisma Software • £19.99

Do your children help you put the shopping away after the weekly trip to the supermarket? If so, they'll very quickly get the hang of this one. Mice in the kitchen may be the last thing anyone wants, but they go together very pleasingly in this case.

Again, the child controls Pepe the mouse, firstly to choose which kind of basket or bag to use, then to select one of the items of shopping displayed, and finally to choose a place to store the item.

Storage places are freezer, fridge, cupboard, drawer, fruit bowl and toy basket. An item will only go into one of these – the child's task is to decide which one.

If the child chooses the right storage place for an item, he or she is rewarded with music and an animated sequence in the kitchen, in which some mousy characters place the item in the relevant storage place, and have a nibble on some cheese.

Graphics	8	Very good
Sound	7	Good
Entertainment	9	Excellent
Educational value	9	Excellent

up fun learning



The Snap game – part of TCA's Picture Book package – in its simplest mode, picture vs picture, and with only one player, who's bound to win... eventually, at least!

Snap

Age range: 2-5
TCA • £19.99

One of the games in the Picture Book package from TCA. Picture Book features several games and a free keyboard overlay which makes matters easier for smaller children. All of the programs in this set feature great sound effects, voice and first class graphics.

Snap is based on the old card game. In its simplest form, the child (or children, as up to three can play) is presented with two pictures on the screen.

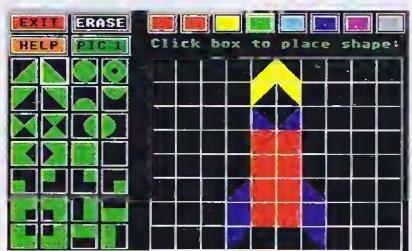
If the pictures are the same, the child presses his or her designated key. If not, the child waits while one of the two pictures changes and presses the key when the matching one appears.

Difficulty increases, for smaller children at least, when either the picture vs word or picture vs letter option is selected. In these cases, the players see only one picture, and press their designated keys whenever the letter (for example, Q for Queen) or word matches the picture.

Each picture is accompanied by an associated sound. Individuals' scores are kept on-screen as the game progresses, until one of the players is declared a winner (if there's only you playing, then it's bound to be you!).

It's a fun game – it proved a favourite with my own children, who played it for long periods, completely disproving my theory that boredom would soon set in!

Graphics	8	Very good
Sound.....	9	Excellent
Entertainment	8	Very good
Educational value	8	Very good



One of the five pictures provided with the Kidshapes program, which children can build on if they wish

Kidshapes/Kidshapes Plus

Age range - Kidshapes 2-8; Kidshapes Plus 8 D A Brumleve £1.95 per disk, plus fixed 50p p&p

Kidshapes and Kidshapes Plus, the 14th and 15th offerings in Brumleve's KIDPRG series, are graphics design programs based on the idea of the magnet board set. Kidshapes is for younger children, and features large targets for the mouse and limited choices.

Kidshapes Plus is for older children (and adults!) and includes a larger number of choices, with the possibility of creating more complex pictures, and offers a "flash" option: selected squares on the design grid can be turned on and off for a variety of effects.

In both versions, the child clicks on a shape on the left of the screen. Clicking on a square of the grid then places the shape. The colours of shapes are changed by clicking on a colour in a palette at the top of the screen.

There is a simple Help feature which (with adult help in the case of younger children) will enable children to start creating very quickly. The child can build on one of several pictures provided, or create his or her own picture from scratch.

The real skill is in deciding which shape and colour to place in a particular square to achieve whatever effect, symmetrical or otherwise, the child is aiming for.

There's a save option, which means the pictures provided can easily be overwritten, and thus lost. It's recommended that you make a back-up copy of the original disk, and that each member of the family who will use the program has a personal copy.

We don't want any arguments about where the spaceship disappeared to, now do we?

The program is very colourful and has a few beeps and a tune, but didn't hold the interest of my team of junior testers for long. Still, what do you expect for £1.95 (plus, if you like the program, a small donation to a school fund)?

Available on separate disks (GD811 and GD812) which include other educational programs, from Goodman International. These programs, written in GFA Basic, are described as careware – if you care, the American author, D A Brumleve, asks that you make a contribution (he suggests \$10) to the Leal School, Urbana, Illinois, ST Fund.

Graphics	7	Good
Sound	4	Poor
Entertainment	5	Could do better
Educational value	5	Could do better

Railway Station, Noah's Ark, Farm Yard

Age Range: approx 3-6
The Jumping Bean Company • £24.99

Three of the games in the Noddy's Playtime package. Noddy's Playtime is one of the best educational programs for younger children ever written for the ST.

Excellent sound and graphics and the overall quality of the games from both educational and entertainment points of view combine to make this package one not to be missed if you have children in this age range. Control is via any of three methods - mouse, joystick or keyboard.

Watching Noddy drive around Toytown in his car is entertaining in itself. If the child directs him to the railway station, there's a recognition and memory test in store. In levels 1 and 2, a train pulls into the station with its window blinds open. The child examines the characters inside for a few seconds, and then the blinds come down.

A picture of one of the characters on the train is then shown, and the child is asked to indicate which blind the character is sitting behind. If the child is right, a point is scored, the train

trundles out of the station, and another one pulls in to start the cycle again. Level 3 is similar, but after the blinds fall, one of them re-opens, and the character who was sitting there is now missing. Children must try to identify the character from the five shown at the bottom of the screen.

In Noah's Ark, a picture of an animal appears in a window in the side of Noah's trusty old vessel. The picture is split into four equal portions. Of course, the portions are jumbled, and the child's task is to replace them in the right order into a second window.

In Farm Yard, the child is asked to match the front and tail ends of animals. At level one, the child is first shown the complete animal - for instance, a goat. Once a key is pressed, the tail end is replaced with that of another animal. The child then scrolls through numerous rear portions of animals until the correct match is found. In level 2, heads are matched to tails, and the complete animal is not shown at the start. Level 3 involves stepping through both heads and tails to find the only animal which can be matched.

It's actually quite good fun to get the answers wrong and make old Big Ears shake his head, and the farmer stamp his feet.

Graphics	10	Excellent
Sound	10	Excellent
Entertainment	10	Excellent
Educational value	10	Excellent



The train now standing at Platform 1... is full of colourful characters in the Railway Station game, part of the Jumping Bean Company's Noddy's Playtime

And Noah did build an ark, but his animals got all mixed up and children were asked to piece them back together so that several thousand years later, David Attenborough could spy on them and, in hushed tones, reveal their innermost secrets...



This is a dolphin

Shapes and Colours

Age range: under 5s
Rainbow Educational Software • £17.99

Shapes and Colours is a collection of six programs which will help children develop colour and shape recognition, an awareness of size and the concept of grouping objects into sets. Smaller children will love it.

The child's host is Bobby the Clown, a colourful, animated character who features in four of the six games and, together with some basic music and sound effects, makes a good job of encouraging children to learn.

The games are all mouse-driven. Four of them each have three levels of difficulty which can easily be set at any time during a game by

hitting the Escape key then choosing the required option.

The games are Snap, a variation on the traditional card game featuring very simple shapes and colours; Painting, in which the child can colour six different scenes using a palette of 12 colours; Sets, where the child places items which are similar into groups; Big and Small, which develops awareness of differences in the size of objects; and the Shape game, which is based on the wheel of fortune game you will know from fêtes, school fairs and the like.

This collection of programs helps pave the way for learning letters and numbers. There are plenty of "reward" animations which encourage children to succeed in the games. Sound - simple music and beeps - is not brilliant, but is used effectively.

Graphics	9	Excellent
Sound	6	Fair
Entertainment	9	Excellent
Educational value	9	Excellent



Finding the odd one out in Big and Small, one of the programs in Rainbow's Shapes and Colours package



Sort out kites and teddy bears - and a whole host of other items - in the Sets game, part of Rainbow's Shapes and Colours

Matching

*Age range: Under 5
Europress Software • £24.99*

Part of the Fun School 3 for the under 5s package, Matching involves the child in identifying not just pairs of shapes, but pairs of the same colour.

No knowledge of the names of the shapes or colours is needed, and the game can be played by very young children with minimal assistance.

In level 1, there is only one row of shapes to match. Another row is added on each successive level.

The child chooses a coloured shape by pressing the spacebar to move the highlight and Enter to select, then repeats the operation to choose another object which matches in terms of both shape and colour.

For every correct matching, a bear moves a little further up the trunk of a tree to reach a coin, which is dropped into a piggy bank.

The graphics are good and the sound is well implemented. Younger children will be delighted by this one.

Graphics	9	Excellent
Sound.....	8	Very good
Entertainment	9	Excellent
Educational value	9	Excellent



Level 1 of Matching, part of Europress Software's Fun School 3, has only one row of shapes and is the obvious starting point for children who haven't played this kind of game before



Life gets more complicated on level 3 of Matching – one of the programs featured in Europress Software's Fun School 3 – with three rows of shapes to match

Fun Train

*Age range: Under 5
Europress Software • £24.99*

Part of the Fun School 4 for the Under 5s package, this is one of the best for my money – and the children liked it, too!

Teddy comes steaming into the station, with a picture on the side of the carriage behind the engine. If the picture does not match the one above and behind the engine, the child presses the spacebar, and Teddy takes the train out of the station.

Another train immediately pulls in, with a different picture. The cycle is repeated until a matching picture arrives, when the child presses the Enter key. Sounds simplistic – but it's great fun, and the hissing and whistling sound effects add to the enjoyment.

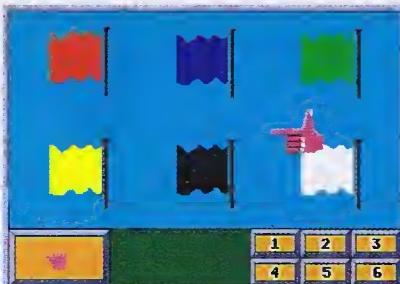
The Fun School series is renowned for its quality, and rightly so. This is an excellent example of how to use graphics, sound and animation to full effect for younger children. Incidentally, each shape has its name written above it, so the game can help develop word recognition, too.

Graphics	9	Excellent
Sound.....	8	Very good
Entertainment	8	Very good
Educational value	9	Excellent



No match this time, so press the spacebar and get ready for another train with a different picture in Europress Software's Fun Train

That's right! We've got a match this time in Fun Train, part of Fun School 4 for the Under 5s. Cue steam engine and train whistle noises



This is one of the teaching levels (odd-numbered) in 4HJ's Colours and Shapes game. Click on a flag to be told what colour it is

Colours and Shapes

*Available as freeware from Goodman International and other PD/shareware libraries
£1.95 for per disk, one-off postage 50p*

Colours and Shapes is one of six educational and fun games which together form Playtime, by 4HJ. It's bright and colourful, and includes good use of sound, including voice.

There are six levels, the odd numbered ones being teaching levels – click with the mouse on a colour or shape and a voice tells you what it is. The even numbered levels are tests – a voice asks the child to select a particular colour and/or shape.

The questions are very simple, such as "Which is the yellow car?" The child answers by clicking the relevant object. If a child wishes to re-hear the name of the colour or shape to be identified, they simply click on an image of a mouth.

Even exiting the program has an appealing style. The child clicks on a waving hand, and is bidden "bye bye" by the voice!

Graphics	9	Excellent
Sound.....	8	Very good
Entertainment	8	Very good
Educational value	9	Excellent



One of the test levels in the Colours and Shapes game. The mouth asks the child to click on a particular object in a particular colour

Contacts

Rainbow Educational Software	0626 779695
Goodman International	0782 335650
Europress Software	0625 859333
Prisma Software (Kids' Academy)	0244 326244
The Jumping Bean Company	0602 792838
TCA	0582 761395

Hard facts

I have had an Atari computer for 14 months. It is a 520STE which I have upgraded to 2.5Mb. I also have an external Atari PC 720B turbo drive, a Citizen Swift 24e printer and have just bought a ProGate II 50DC hard drive.

The reason I am writing is that I have a little niggle about the lack of information and instructions on the use of hard drives. I have checked through all the ST mags with most of them just giving the merits and ratings about which one to buy. The information on the use of a hard drive was very meagre indeed.

The manual which came with my hard drive was not very good in explaining the use of the Manager program. Would it be possible for a couple of pages in your magazine to explain the best use of the hard drive with regards to paint programs, word processors and desk accessories, and how to use them in the different partitions?

It is a little bit frustrating having the hardware and not being able to use it as much as possible through lack of knowledge.

TJ Evans, Montgomeryshire, Powys

I am a little confused as to what information on hard drives you would like to see covered in the magazine.

Using a hard drive, once installed and partitioned, is exactly like using a floppy disk in that the procedures for opening, copying files, creating folders and so on are identical.

The only difference is that you don't have any hassle with swapping disks, there is lots more space per partition (depending on the size of the hard drive, that is) and it's a damn sight faster than a floppy too.

I guess you may be having problems with actually formatting and partitioning the hard drive. Unfortunately, each hard disk manufacturer usually provides their own proprietary hard disk software with the drive.

Therefore, a feature on each particular package would only be of interest to owners of that particular hard drive and not hard drive owners in general.

Also, to prepare a hard drive for use merely requires that it be formatted and partitioned and these two processes are not really complex enough to justify a feature in the magazine.

You also mention that information on using specific programs - such as paint programs and word processors - with different partitions would be a good idea.

Again, using such programs with a hard drive is identical to using them with a floppy, except that the aforementioned disk changes, speed and space problems do not exist.

In other words, the programs do not generally require any special setup or alterations in order to work or take advantage of a hard disk and if they do, such procedures would be covered in the manual and be only specific to that particular software package.

This isn't to say that Atari ST User ignores the hard drive owner.

I myself have a hard drive, which, amazingly enough is a ProGate II 50DC (albeit upgraded to 340Mb) and I am therefore aware of the many utilities available and the problems which hard drive owners can

encounter. As such, I try to cover both subjects in Advice Service.

ST and PC VGA monitor?

Is there a high resolution mono monitor available which can be used with an STE and an IBM PC in VGA mode? If so, can you supply details of price and where one can be obtained?

A C McRobbie, Stirlingshire

Ladbrake Computing have two monitors which may suit your needs. They can supply you with either a mono VGA monitor (£139.99) or a colour multisync monitor (£399.99).

Both can be connected directly to a PC using the standard VGA connector or, to your ST via a simple adapter. However,

the mono monitor has to be internally adjusted slightly in order to have the screen centred when used on an ST. If plugged into a PC, this picture is not quite centred.

You can adjust it internally to centre the screen but this requires opening up the monitor each time you use it between PC and ST. It is also quite dangerous to fiddle about inside any monitor if you do not know what you are doing.

The colour monitor should be able to handle this picture centring problem a little better in that it has quite an array of screen position controls located externally.

These may enable you to conveniently adjust the picture as required without having to open up the monitor.

For more information on your specific

Advice

SpeedoGDOS ahead

I am an amateur Assembly programmer currently working on a font program. I need information on the font header of SpeedoGDOS fonts. If you could supply me with this information, I would be most grateful.

Your wish is our command...

I Hendry, Newcastle

SpeedoGDOS font header

Offset	Description	Data size	Offset	Description	Data size
0	8 byte string consisting of D1.0 + CR + LF + NULL + NULL	8 bytes	Bit 2 - Reserved		
8	Font size in bytes	4 bytes	Bit 3 - Reserved		
12	Minimum font buffer size in bytes	4 bytes	Bit 4 - Reserved		
16	Minimum character buffer size in bytes	2 bytes	Bit 5 - Reserved		
18	Header size in bytes	2 bytes	Bit 6 - Reserved		
20	Source font ID	2 bytes	Bit 7 - Reserved		
22	Source font version number	2 bytes	263	Classification flags	1 byte
24	Source font name	70 bytes	Bit 0 - Italic		
94	Manufacturing date	10 bytes	Bit 1 - Monospace		
104	Character set name for font	66 bytes	Bit 2 - Serif		
170	Manufacturer ID	2 bytes	Bit 3 - Display		
172	Character set ID	2 bytes	Bit 4 - Reserved		
174	Copyright notice	78 bytes	Bit 5 - Reserved		
252	Number of character indexes in character set	2 bytes	Bit 6 - Reserved		
254	Number of characters in font	2 bytes	Bit 7 - Reserved		
256	Index of first character in font	2 bytes	264	Family classification	1 byte
258	Number of kerning tracks	2 bytes	Bit 0 - Don't care		
260	Number of kerning pairs	2 bytes	Bit 1 - Serif		
262	Font flags	1 byte	Bit 2 - Sans Serif		
	Bit 0 - Extended font		Bit 3 - Monospace		
	Bit 1 - Reserved		Bit 4 - Script		
			Bit 5 - Decorative		
			Bit 6 - Reserved		
			Bit 7 - Reserved		

needs, give Lodbroke Computing or call an 0772 203166.

Amstrad to Atari

I currently have two computers, an Amstrad CPC464 which uses cassettes and an Atari 520STE which uses 3.5in floppy disks.

I wish to know if there are any companies or people who can convert the games on the cassettes from the Amstrad and re-write them to put them onto disk for the Atari.

I have hundreds of games for the Atari but most of the good ones are for the Amstrad, which is why I wish to transfer them over. Is there anything I can buy which will do it for me or is what I am asking illegal?

S G Jahnsen, Prescot, Merseyside

There is only one way to get the games

dismantle my ST and fit it as the warranty has long since run out.

K Leary, Dublin, Ireland

It sounds like your single-sided days are over. Replacing the internal drive involves nothing more than the removal of a power plug and data cable from the back of the single-sided drive and connecting your newly acquired double-sided drive in its place.

ST beginners

I have recently bought an Atari 1040STFM initially for my children to help them with their school education.

I now find myself wanting to know more about the workings of the computer in order to supplement a computer course that I am

home and copying the relevant files to my hard disk, I find that they do not load or appear in the Desk menu. It's as though my ST can't find them.

Unfortunately, my friend is in the USA for a few months working, so I turn to you for help. What am I doing wrong?

B Hay, Sheffield

One of the most common reasons why an accessory will not appear in the desk menu is that it is not in the root directory of your hard disk or partition.

I assume your disk auto-boots from partition C, in which case, you must ensure that your .ACC files are in the root directory of this partition.

The root directory is merely computer jargon meaning you are not in any folders. For instance, double-clicking on your C partition icon will open a window showing the contents. You will also notice that the top shaded bar of this window will probably contain C:.*. This is the root directory.*

If you subsequently enter a folder, for instance called ST User, you will see the shaded bar change to C:\STUSER.*.*

You are now not in the root directory but in the STUSER directory. To get back to the root directory, you simply click on the top left box of the window until you see C:.* in the shaded bar.*

I would guess that in order to keep your C partition uncluttered, you have placed all your .ACC files in a folder. The ST does not like having to look in folders for accessories and expects to find them in the root directory.

So, simply copy your accessories from the folder to the root directory and they will then be available from the Desk menu.

Got a problem?

Are you at the point of taking an axe to your ST? Do you want to pulverise your printer? Well just count to ten and relax. Then, jot down the problems you are having, along with a detailed description of your setup.

Include information on the type of ST you have, the TOS version (if known), what peripherals are attached and any extra hardware that lurks inside your computer (accelerators, graphics cards and so on) and I'll do my very best to come up with a solution.

For those who have had problems and overcome them, chances are that someone somewhere is having the same problems and would benefit from your advice.

So get in print and send any tips or suggestions that other users may find helpful.

Send all tips and cries for help to: Darren Evans, Advice Service, Atari ST User, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

SERVICE

from your Amstrad onto your ST and that's to try and persuade the company who own the copyright to convert it.

You seem to be under the impression that you merely need to copy the games programs from the Amstrad's cassettes to a floppy disk in order to use them on a Atari. This is impossible in the case of these two computers.

Converting a game to another machine requires it to be completely re-written. It's not just a matter of using the same program code on the other computer.

The only real ports of a game that are feasible transportable to another computer with little change are the graphics.

These problems then raise the question as to whether there is enough demand for an Atari version of the game to justify the cost of paying the programmers to effectively rewrite the game for it.

Double switch

At the moment, my 520STFM has a single-sided internal disk drive. However, a friend has recently given me his dead 520STE which suffered major component damage due to a faulty power supply.

He was aware of my single-sided predicament and has informed me that the dead computer has a double-sided internal disk drive.

He was unsure as to whether the drive also suffered damage at the time his computer fried but he said it may be perfectly all right.

A friend of mine who has a PC decided to try the double-sided mechanism out in one of his spare drive bays and it works.

My question is, can I simply replace my single-sided drive with the double-sided one? I am quite prepared to let my PC owner friend

about to start. Are there any good books which you can recommend for a beginner such as myself? I have visited many book stores but have been unable to find any material relating to the ST.

J Michaels, Derby

Good books on the ST are difficult to find in high street bookstores these days. Thankfully for the beginner though, The ST Club still stock two ideal books for the newcomer.

The Atari ST Explored is a good introductory publication and costs £9.95. The other book is called Your Second Manual to the Atari ST, which has a more light-hearted approach in its explanations. For more information, contact The ST Club on 0602 455250.

Dead accessories

I'm new to the ST and have recently visited a friend who is more experienced. He regularly buys public domain software and has many utilities which make using the ST much easier.

He explained to me about accessories which remain in memory and provide enhancements and useful features.

One of the annoying things I find about the ST is its extremely versatile file selector. I have a 120Mb hard disk divided into six partitions. When I need to load a file from a word processor, I constantly have to type in the drive letter if I need to switch to a different partition to find it.

Luckily, there are decent programmers out there who have written utilities to provide a replacement file selector which has features such as drive letter buttons.

Even more luckily, my friend gave me a collection of file replacement accessories on a disk for me to try out. However, after getting

Hand scanners have always been one of the most desirable add-ons for Atari users. There's something magical about digitising an image such as a family snapshot or some line art you've drawn, displaying it on the screen and then incorporating it into something else, whether it's a desktop published document or some creative artwork.

Unfortunately the models on offer haven't exactly been the most flexible. Very few true greyscale scanners exist for the Atari and none has ever been widely available except to owners of the bigger DTP packages.

Migraph's Touchup can convert dithered black-and-white images into greyscales but lots of detail gets lost in the process. To get something more than a single bit image you have to look at the other end of the market where flatbed scanners cost anything from £600 upwards.

All that has just changed with the arrival of two new packages. One comes from Gasteiner and the other from CGS and both are based on an identical scanner head manufactured by Mustek.

The Gasteiner package is for Falcons only and comes with some new colour scanning software from Migraph, while the CGS bundle works with any Atari, including the ST/STE, and comprises a scanner driver accessory and the image processing software Chagall. Neither is cheap, but they do open up all sorts of options.

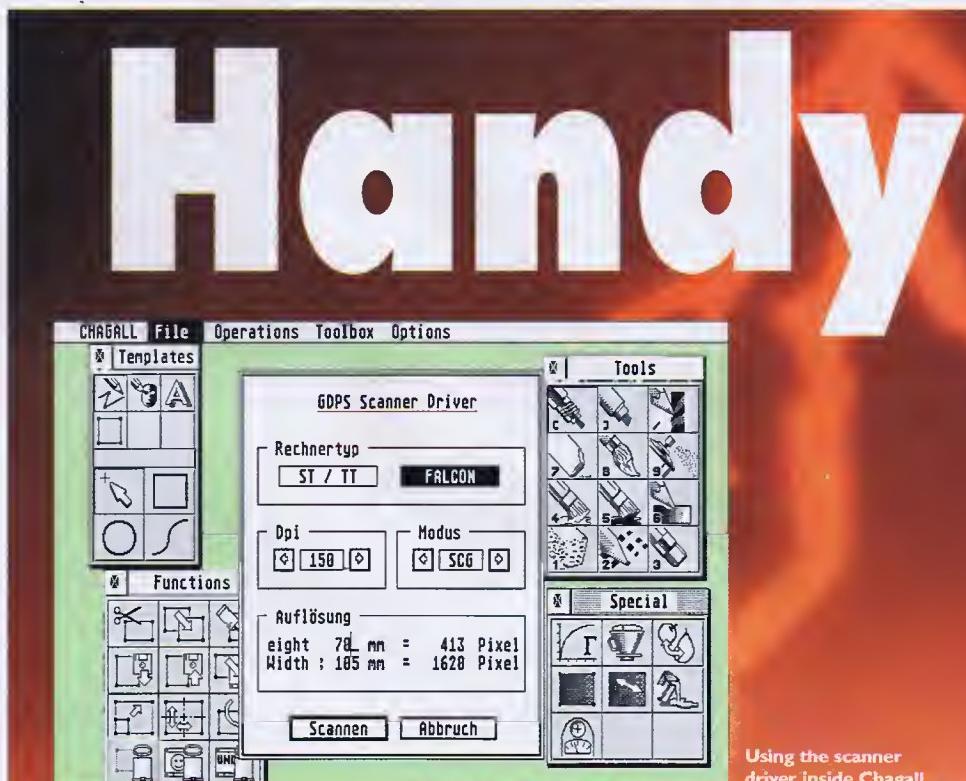
First of all, let's look at the hardware and as the scanner head is the same in each case, we'll start there. There's nothing remarkable about the shape, weight or

design though the colour - jet black - is certainly unusual.

It's a pretty average scanner head with a top mounted on/off button, a large roller at the front and two small rollers at the back to give it some stability. It isn't as stable as some scanner heads but I didn't experience any problems keeping

it on track, even in awkward positions on the desktop.

On the right-hand side of the head are two controls, a wheel for altering the brightness and a four way switch for the resolution. The switch is marked $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and 1 which can be somewhat confusing when trying to determine the resolution.



Using the scanner driver inside Chagall

Jpeg compression

One of the first things you'll notice when you take up colour scanning is that your hard drive seems an awful lot smaller. If you're using a floppy-only system, you'll be in even more trouble as most scanned colour images won't fit on a normal density disk. Colour images take up a lot of space - a 4in x 4in, 200dpi colour scan will create a 1.9Mb image.

The Joint Photographic Experts Group was set up to devise a method of compressing and storing huge photo-realistic images and the result was the Jpeg file format.

It is what is known as a "lossy" compression method in that some detail is inevitably lost when it is saved but the reduction in file size can be enormous. That 1.9Mb image can be packed into around 100k without too much loss of clarity. The only problem is that repeatedly decompressing and recompressing an image results in cumulative loss of detail.

The scanner software reviewed here doesn't support Jpegs but Migraph's Colorkit states that it will be present in the next release. For those wanting to investigate the subject, Compo's Studio Photo will save in Jpeg format and French programming team Brainstorm has just released its Falcon Jpeg decoder/viewer into the public domain. It should be available now from the better PD libraries.

CGS Colour Hand Scanner

The CGS scanner uses the Atari cartridge port as usual and comprises a simple, neat interface into which is plugged the scanner head and the mains adaptor.

The software driver is a desk accessory that, once installed, allows images to be scanned directly into Chagall, the high powered image processing package with a stunning interface. It runs on any 2Mb Atari, although ST/STE owners will have to use ST high resolution or a third-party colour graphics card.

The interface revolves around several floating toolboxes with some very smartly drawn icons. There are six main toolboxes, templates, functions, tools, special, masks and. Images are also displayed in GEM windows as are the options screens associated with each tool so the bigger display you have the better.

No manual exists for Chagall, although there is comprehensive online help in English as a consolation. Up to 32 times normal magnification is possible and there are dozens of tools for creating images from scratch (paintbrush, airbrush and eraser plus chalk, lightener, darkener, and sponge) as well as editing, filtering and retouching scanned images.

Chagall is one of the most versatile image processing programs around and this is reflected in the impressive range of TIFF export options which include three compres-

sion settings (none, run length encoded and LZW), five general settings (TIFF 6.0, RGB true colour, 256-colour, greyscale and Reprostudio compatibility) and a choice of Intel or Motorola byte order. Scanned images can also be exported in IMG, PAC, PIC, and P13 formats.

MASKING

As a full-blown image processor, Chagall also has features like masking with support for eight-bit greyscale masks, a magic wand, and masking by colour.

Colours can be changed, balance altered and there are some useful filter effects that include sharpening, smoothing and a clever combination of the two, plus smudge, invert, mosaic

They are, in fact, fractions of the maximum resolution available in any given mode.

When scanning in colour the maximum resolution is 200 dots per inch (dpi) so the settings refer to 50, 100, 150 and 200dpi respectively. In greyscale or mono modes the maximum resolution is

400dpi, so the settings are 100, 200, 300 and 400dpi respectively.

On the left side of the scanner head come two more controls. One is a four-way switch for the dither/halftone pattern, which varies from small dots to large dots and a square pattern used for line art and optical character recognition.

The other four-way switch controls the mode, of which there are four. Firstly comes Super Colour, SCG, which will recognise up to 262,144 different colours (18 bits of colour made up of 6 bits each of red, green and blue).

Second comes CG, the ordinary colour mode that recognises 4,096 colours (12 bits of colour made up of 4 bits each for red, green and blue). Third is the greyscale mode (MG) which is capable of scanning in 64 true greyscales and finally the line art or mono mode (D/T) for scanning line art and text.

WARM-UP

The scanner uses a fluorescent lamp which needs plenty of time to warm up before it gives its best. The recommended warm-up time for the first scan is around two minutes and both sets of scanning software have delaying dialogues to prevent you from scanning too quickly.

If the lamp is cold the image will be very dark, particularly when scanning in colour. The brightness can be increased to compensate but it doesn't stop the process being somewhat irritating.

After a few scans close together you can get away with a 15-second warm up but then the problem goes the other way. The lamp starts to heat up and the scans turn out too light.

Again this has to be compensated for by reducing the brightness using the wheel or afterwards using editing software such as Chagall.

>

colours

Getting pictures into your Atari is easy. Andrew Wright puts two colour hand scanning packages to the test



Chagall can be used to correct the scans for brightness and colour balance

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Good scan quality with some excellent software.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

The lack of printed material could be a problem for inexperienced users.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

Cheap it ain't but when you consider the price of Chagall alone, it looks a better deal.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

Product: Colour hand scanner/Chagall v2.00

Supplier: CGS, 231 Northborough Road, Norbury, London SW16 4TU

Telephone: 081-679 7307

Price: £399

Configuration: Any Atari with 2Mb or more high res monitor or graphics card for ST/STE

and embossing. Mono images can be outlined, thinned, thickened, roughened, smoothed and there's a noise reduction filter too – useful for cleaning up scans from dirty originals.

CGS are still sorting out problems with the unregulated power supply for the scanner head which tends to produce a greener image than normal.

The driver software is still in German and there's no sign of a manual for the actual scanner at this early stage but that is more than made up for by the bundling of such excellent software and the fact that ST/STE owners can now scan by hand in full colour.

Flatbed scanners

Next step up from a colour handheld is a colour and greyscale capable flatbed scanner such as the Epson GT6500, also available from CGS. Flatbeds offer several advantages over hand scanners – they can scan a full A4 page or equivalent-sized image, they can recognise more levels of colour and the quality is much better. On the other hand, of course, the price goes up to match.

The GT6500 looks like a small photocopier with a glass plate concealed by a flexible rubber lid. It has a sizeable footprint measuring some 22in x 13in although it is only 5in high. It weighs in at 20lbs and is connected to the computer via a custom cable.

The GT6500 comes with two different interface options, SCSI or parallel. SCSI is faster but parallel connection is generally easier on an ST as no host adaptor is needed.

CGS's Look II scanner driver software runs on any Atari and allows scanning of images at resolutions at an effective maximum resolution of 1,200dpi in either 24-bit colour, 256 true greyscales or standard monochrome if necessary.

Scanning direct-to-disk is supported for large images and the program requires at least 600 by 400 pixels screen resolution. Images can be saved in a wide range of formats including monochrome IMG files, Targa, CRG and several forms of TIFF file including those compatible with other Digital Arts programs.

Gasteiner Colour Hand Scanner

The Gasteiner hand scanner plugs into the Falcon's parallel port, a highly unusual configuration. A small adaptor is inserted first, into which is plugged a connector attached to the scanner interface by a short ribbon cable. The scanner head and mains adaptor plug into the interface as normal.

The MultiTOS-compatible software, called ColorKit, comes as two programs, one for true colour mode and the other for mono or lesser colour modes.

A Falcon with 4Mb or more of memory is required and the 50-page manual recommends using the true colour program in 40-column mode though it appears to function perfectly well in interlaced 80-column true colour mode on an RGB monitor. The 80-column mode is recommended for the standard program.

ColorKit TC, the true colour version, is better for scanning in colour as it allows 65,535 of the 262,144 colours picked up by the scanner to be displayed on-screen.

Scanned images are also displayed in real time on the screen so you can check exactly what you are scanning as you move the scanner head. However it can't be used for mono or greyscale scanning, which is where the standard program comes in.

The non-true colour version of ColorKit is much the same as the true colour version except that it has several different options for displaying scanned images with more colours than can be displayed on-screen.

ColorKit is a GEM program with a

toolbar down the left-hand side of the image window that provides access to the main functions and the same commands duplicated in the drop down menus.

The main dialogue is the settings box, from which you specify the resolution and mode (making sure they match those on the head itself), and the length and width of the scan. When you start the scan a time bar is displayed on screen to allow the scanner head to warm up, although you can ignore it if you need to.

If you're using the standard program you will be asked how you want the scanned image displayed and whether you want to use dithering (error correction) or not.

Once it's on-screen you can move around the image or use the clipping tool to crop it, discarding the edges, for example, and then save it in one of three formats, IFF, Targa (16 or 24 bit) or TIFF (compressed or uncompressed).

These can be loaded into most DTP and graphics programs.

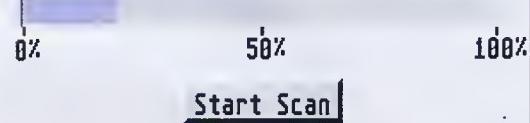
COMPRESSED

Other options include saving with the full range of scanned colours or with the number chosen for the display and mono images can be saved with CCITT or Packbits compressed TIFF format or the widely used GEM IMG format.

The colour scan quality is remarkably good and for casual viewing there's very little to choose from between the CG and SCG modes, although when you



Warming Up Scanner Lamp...



The warm-up reminder

start image editing the differences become rather more obvious.

The greyscales are particularly useful for DTP work and the high resolution makes them handy for blowing up parts of photographs. The mono mode is just as good and the scanner certainly doesn't suffer for being principally a colour design.

The ColorKit bundle is a good all-round performer although it is certainly pricey in comparison to the more professional flatbed option. The software is basic and covers little more than scanning the image and saving to disk though it has a good, well-written manual with plenty of hints and tips.

It would be nice to see facilities for altering the brightness and contrast if not the colour balance and the fact that scanned images can't be reloaded is a bit of a nuisance for comparative purposes.

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Nice scan quality but the software is basic.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

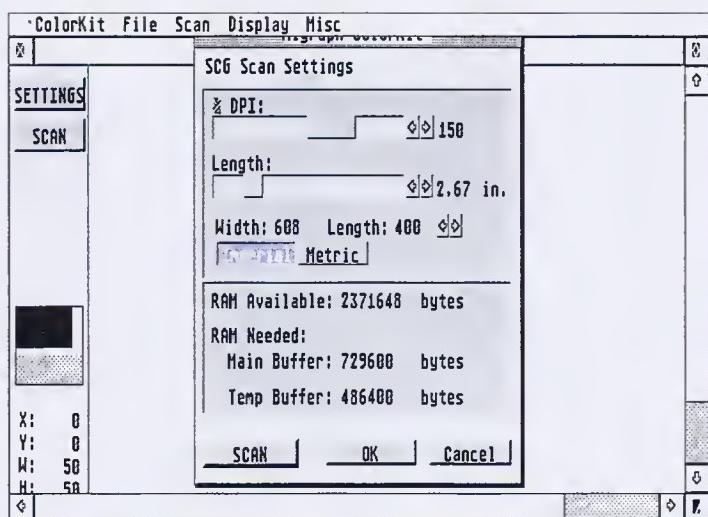
Excellent, helpful manual with precise instructions.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

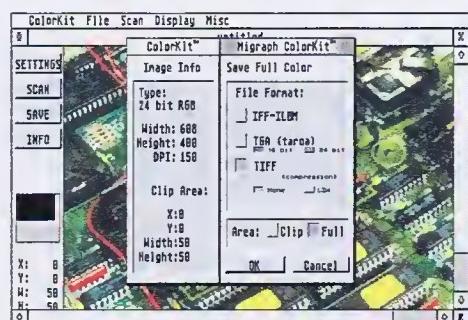
VALUE FOR MONEY

Seems a bit pricey, but there's little competition.

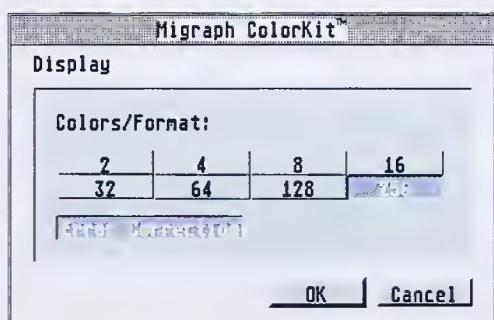
Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling



Preparing to scan in Colorkit TC – the standard program has additional options for selecting the mode



Saving a true colour image using Migraph's ColourKit



After a scan you can choose how many colours the program will use to display the image

Product: Colour hand scanner/ColorKit

Supplier: Gasteiner

Telephone: 081-365 6000

Price: £399

Configuration: Any Falcon with 4Mb memory or more

ST ACTION

May 1994



LOTUS TRILOGY TOP GEAR!



**INSIDE... POLICE QUEST • LOTUS TRILOGY • PART ONE OF OUR
GUIDE TO SENSIBLE SOFTWARE'S CANNON FODDER • PREMIER
MANAGER 2 PREVIEWED • A FOUR PAGE ROUND-UP OF THE
BEST PD GAMES AVAILABLE TO BUY FOR YOUR ST**

These days it's very hard to find a brand new ST graphic adventure. The last one of any note was US Gold's classic Monkey Island which contained some really sexy graphics, but the thing which stood out the most was the high standard of playability.

The lack of decent adventure games since then has been quite worrying, but there is a salvation to this problem and that is via budget software. US Gold are some of the leaders in this field and their Kixx XL range contains some really outstanding pieces of software.

Among this budget range is a whole batch of classic Sierra adventure games. Only a few years ago, Sierra were the company to get your adventure games from. The Leisure Suit Lorry, Space Quest and King's Quest series entertained ST gamers, and are all classic examples of the genre.

Before Sierra released these, almost every adventure involved the use of type-in commands and some quite dire graphics, although at the time your brain strangely saw through these discrepancies and you thought that you were playing one of the best games of all time.

Then Sierra with their revolutionary 3D animated adventures arrived on the scene and sent game players into raptures. The games represented a totally new approach to computer gaming.

They featured detailed 3D background screens with life-like characters, and the

improved parser let you talk to your computer in whole sentences.

These new adventures were interactive, changing as you progressed, explored and solved puzzles. New facets were revealed as you delved further and further into the games. Because of these random events, you could play them many times over and never play the same game twice.

One of my favourite Sierra adventures of all time was Police Quest and it's now with a sense of nostalgia and a smile on my face that I get to play it all over again.

Basically Police Quest is an interactive movie where you become the main character. In this case, you play the part of Sonny Bonds, a police officer hoping to make it big in the fictional town of Lytton.

The main goal is to bust a big-time drug dealer with the street name of Death Angel.



Before you embark on the trail of crime you must always check your vehicle. Otherwise you might get a puncture and it'll be game over

POLICE



Sonny Bonds in his plain clothes and by golly they are plain! What the guy in the shower is doing is anybody's guess

Halt! Police officer! Raise your hands and lie down on the ground while I enjoy a blast from my adventure past courtesy of Sierra and US Gold's budget label, Kixx XL

Before you can consider taking on the might of the Death Angel, you must advance from the rank of street officer to undercover cop.

This is achieved by establishing trustworthy contacts and valuable leads as well as dealing with drunk drivers, angry bikers and traffic violators.

Before you hit streets, you will need to know police procedures, be familiar with the streets of Lytton and have a working

knowledge of the vehicle and traffic code. These procedures are totally obscure thanks to the fact that the game was designed by an actual American police officer.

You can control Sonny Bonds by using either the joystick, mouse or keyboard. My personal favourite method is the keyboard because you have to use it to construct command sentences anyway.

There are three different views. The first,



Carol's Caffeine Castle is a place that is in every cop's heart. Grab those doughnuts!



The second view in the game is when you're patrolling the streets of Lytton in your squad car

Score: 0 of 245

Sound: on



The start of Sonny's adventure and it's about time he hit those streets and started to catch some criminals

BUDGET ACTION

and the one you'll see the most, is the normal 3D view. The second is shown when Sonny gets into his squad car and switches to an overhead view. You can then zoom around the city of Lytton putting wrongs to rights.

The third view materialises when Sonny comes face to face with another character and a magnified picture of the person's face is displayed. This doesn't happen

counts.

The playability and addiction levels soar off the scale and it won't be long before you're engrossed in a manic world of cops and robbers.

Let's put it this way. I played and completed Police Quest when it first came out in 1987. Seven years later, I've played and completed it again and I still get as much enjoyment out of it as I did all those years ago.

As far as adventures go they don't get much better than this and considering the excellent bargain price you'd have to be a complete mug to miss out on it.

JONATHAN MADDOCK

QUEST



Do you recognise that man? Why it's Sonny Bonds in his brilliant pimp disguise!



At several points you will be expected to attend a briefing before you go out on patrol

with everyone though; only the more significant characters are featured.

The hardest and most annoying thing about Police Quest is the driving section. When you're in hot pursuit of a criminal you tend to fly around the streets without any problems, but when you're casually sauntering around the city you get killed by some stupid Sunday driver and it's game over.

This can be resolved by always saving your game before you get into the squad car, but even then it's really annoying to keep on restoring your position. Apart from that minor factor, I can't really complain about anything else.

There isn't a lot more I can tell you about the actual game or story line because I'd only spoil the whole adventure for you. All that's left to do is sum up.

Police Quest is an absolute cracker of an adventure and one that should be in everyone's games collection. Looking back at Sierra's effort, you might cringe at the state of the graphics and the abysmal sound, but Police Quest has got it where it



To be successful in Police Quest you will need to play a pretty damn good game of five card draw poker

ACTION GOLD

VISION



AUDIO



DIFFICULTY



LASTABILITY



Police Quest might lack a little oomph on the graphics and sound front, but it reigns supreme in the playability and addiction stakes. A great game at a great bargain price. Do not miss!

91%



Inside the police station is a computer which can be used to get information on some of the criminals you are chasing

Publisher ► US Gold

Developer ► Sierra

Disks ► 1

Price ► \$16.99

HD Install ► Yes

Size ► 1/2 meg



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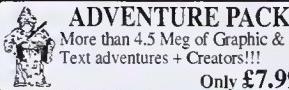
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With public domain programmers like Jeff Minter, Ian Scott and others holding the torch so to speak, several PD-games have been produced over the years that are just as playable and, in some cases, better than commercial games, but cost just the price of a disk.

Detailed here are the best of the bunch, the titles that should be in any respectable gamer's software cupboard...

Llamatron

Goodman International

Llamatron is what PD and shareware is all about – viciously addictive gameplay coupled with a programmer's personality. Banished from these disks is a large corporate image of blandness and playing it by the book, gone are the clanc-like marketing campaigns and bold, unfulfilled promises and above all, rejected are the extortianate price tags that plague the commercial software market.

Imagine the classic Robotron and its sequel, Smash TV and you've got the basic format for a blast fest that leaves your ears ringing, your hand muscles aching and your concentration recovering for a week after the intense gameplay.

The single aim is to work your way through 100 screens of chaos to reach the heaven herd by killing every single nasty on each level, using an all-firing, all-dancing llama (stay with me on this one).

On each level, the objective is to



destroy the enemy – which come in all shapes and sizes from skulls and brains to telephones and Coke cans – while collecting as many of your stray flock as possible.

This flock is made up of goats and baby llamas that need to be touched to be collected. They then follow you round until the screen has been cleared. If the player's lucky, a heart power-up will appear once that's taken, instantly attracts all of your furry friends to your side.

Other power-ups provide extra lives, smart bombs and multiple shots among others. There is also a two-player mode where you and a friend can play simultaneously to add to the competition.

The sound deserves a special mention, with its Yella samples and weird and wonderful noises that, at full volume, gives the game a whole new lease of life.

If you only buy one game from this round up, Llamatron will not disappoint and if you're wondering what Jeff Minter is doing at the moment, you'll just have to wait until Tempest 2000. If it's anything like this title, it'll be a cut-and-aud classic. This is what gaming is all about.

PD classics

The public domain offers the player a back catalogue of classic titles to choose from, and all at seriously knocked-down prices. Adam Phillips digs out the best...



Revenge of the Mutant Camels

Goodman International

Way back in the yesteryear of the Spectrum and the Commodore 64, Revenge of the Mutant Camels reared its hump and caused quite a stir among players and critics alike.

Its graphics were off the wall – camels leaping into the skies, shooting a bazaar of weird and wonderful enemies. Spread over 42 levels, the player simply has to survive. Like its big brother,

Llamatron, a friend can join in the frenzy in the shape of a goat that can leap on the camel's back for extra protection and firepower. Power-ups rain from the skies spelling instant death if touched or saoping your camel into a one-hump killing machine.

While not as accomplished as you-know-what, this is still an excellent blast that'll appeal to all Defender fans.



More frenzied finger action is the name of the game in *Revenge of the Mutant Camels*

Action FEATURE

Walls of Illusion

LAPD

This is a Dungeon Master clone that's so clone-ish that you could put it in a Dungeon Master box and no-one could tell the difference... apart from one, oh-so-small detail, namely being the fact that the entire thing is in German.

Never mind because the basics of the game are relatively easy to pick up and use. The scenario seems to be set in a tower where the object is to get to the top, for whatever reason.

Magic, fighting with an assortment of different weapons, keys and other treasures are all featured and coupled with graphics that are of an excellent standard.

One feature that was surely lacking from Dungeon Master that has been used to good effect here is the auto-mapping system (I'll never understand why some people get a kick out of mopping stuff; it's so tedious drawing each line on a piece of graph paper).

Be warned though, even with this luxury, Walls of Illusion is a fiendishly hard game - the enemy seem to have a particular talent for wasting you and you party of four at an alarming rate of blows.

This is nothing to complain about though because a challenge is good for the gaming reflexes and makes that small amount of money go a long, long way.



If you want Dungeon Master then get this... German included

Jetpac

Available from: Goodman International

Another blast from the past, this is a great conversion of the original Spectrum game featuring one man, a jetpac and his industrial-standard laser beam for frying aliens of all shapes and sizes.

For those uninitiated in the ways of this golden oldie, the game is split over 50 differing levels where the player must firstly construct his spacecraft that drops from the top of the screen and then fill it with fuel canisters which also drop from the heavens.

While this is all going on, the level is inundated with creatures which seem to include every known species in the universe, making your progress more difficult. Some simply float around and get in the way, while others home in on you, intent on causing at least a punctured hernia.

So this is hardly original stuff - most PD software isn't - but that doesn't mean it's not playable, and Jetpac has buckets of that vital ingredient. Recommended.



Use the platforms to rest on while your escape falls from the skies in Jetpac - the ST version

Dave Munsie's Games Collection Part

Goodman International

Reviewed in *Atari ST User* last month, this collection of nine gaming greats (well, nearly) was a complete surprise to behold when I first loaded it into the ST.

Without wanting to sound nostalgic, these titles showed what could be achieved when a programmer didn't have buckets of memory, graphics and sound cards plus a plethora of other highly useful but ultimately lozenge-inducing facilities.

While David Munsie's collection can never be called original, you'll be hard pushed to find a compilation that boasts so much playability.

Featured are Kid GP, a reasonable version of Bubble Bobble; Evader, a scrolling Phoenix/Galaxians; and Bugs, an excellent Centipede cloned with added power-ups and end-of-garden baddies.

The next three include Kid Kong, a pixel perfect rendition of the world's first platformer; Donkey Kong; Frogger; and ST Invaders.

The last trio are less well known from yesteryear - Dork Pearl, a game where you must guide a bouncy ball over a series of platforms hanging in space; Bubble, a Dr Mario/Tetris spin-off; and Koboom, previously seen on the Commodore 64, which is the weakest of the selection, involving deflecting bombs.

What all this amounts to is a piece of software that may well be living in the past but thoroughly deserves your attention in the present, and will be played well in to the future.

Oh, it brings back memories
of candy floss and beaches...



.. and crushes and blashes. I think I'm going to cry...



You'd be off your rocker if you didn't grab this nine-game collection rather swiftly from David Munsie, because it is excellent

PD classics

Fatemaster

New Age PDL

Fate's a funny old thing, especially when the particular master of it has to sort out a war that has broken out between two races that inhabit the same planet.

The last message received by the Intergalactic War Council is to steer clear and pray that this epidemic of violence and suffering doesn't spread to other worlds in the universe.

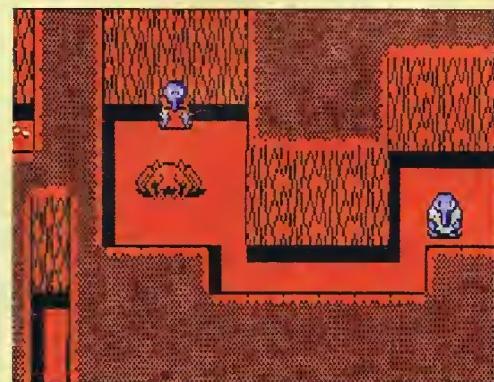
Ignoring this advice, you, in the role of a top secret agent, are teleported down to the planet's surface to find out exactly what has happened. The following story unwinds with humour and a twist of betrayal and massacre.

This may sound like heavy stuff but, due to its light-hearted approach, the proceedings move along with intrigue and a craving to discover exactly what has happened.

Presented in an overhead view, the player simply moves the elephant-nosed sprite around the screen, engaging in conversation and combat and solving puzzles, to use the right object in the right place variety.

The program is very user-friendly and its only negative point is the combat, which drags after beating up the seventh spider that crosses your path. Text-based, it's very much a case of sitting back and seeing what the computer decides.

However, good definitely outweighs bad, which makes Fatemaster a title worth investing in...



A story enriched by tales of deceit and a holocaust of an alien race... not very politically correct, eh?

Glass Buttock of Tharg

Caledonia PDL

Another title produced by the maker of the *Grandad* series, the oddly-named *Glass Buttock of Tharg* has a cast of thousands and gives the player the opportunity to send Mr Bean and other celebs into battle on horseback.

Indeed, take elements of an old Spectrum game called *The Lords of Midnight*, written by Mike Singleton (he of Midwinter fame) and add a touch of Scott humour, and players everywhere have a title that's simple but very addictive.

In a land far away, a glass buttock has been put in charge of the country, ruling with an iron cheek. Twelve stars from music, film and television have decided that its toilet handle of terror must come to an end.

Viewed in the first person, the player must move each celebrity around the map, visiting castles and recruiting as many soldiers as possible. Once done,



it's time to head to the keep for a showdown of power. As far as game complexities go, that's about it other than the various battles that ensue when stumbling across an enemy patrol.

It's the simplicity of gameplay that works so well at the end of the day, leading to compulsive playing and eager

Grandad 2

Caledonia PDL

Ian Scott has created a computing legend in the PD world with the highly acclaimed and original *Grandad* series. Detailed graphics and amusing storylines add up to a set of ideal buys for the prudent adventure buyer.

In *Grandad 2*, the cantankerous old man has lost his sandwiches. Due to his lack of cash because of the VAT he has to pay on his toaster, Grandad is a little huffed and needs to lay his hands on the mislaid sarnies sharpish.

Beginning his quest on a juicy motorbike outside the gents lavs, the OAP must drive from location to location, solving puzzles to

lead him to his goal. Cafes, theme parks and a flasher all feature in the game with many other surprises in store. Similar to *Monkey Island* in design, the player must manipulate objects and use them in the right place or with the right person.

The graphics are impressive and even include perspective – as Grandad moves into the background, he becomes smaller and vice-versa.

The gameplay is fun if a little frustrating when you can't think of what to do next and the whole proceedings are genuinely funny in places. If you're after something that isn't guns blazing and corpses burning under a red alien sky, a trip down to the park with Grandad offers a fruitful and satisfying alternative.



Grandad has lost his sarnies in *Grandad 2*, and it's up to you to find them... I doubt that they'll be in the ladies' toilets though, do you?

Oxyd

New Age PDL

As far as ball games go, *Oxyd* can be loosely described as *Marble Madness* meets devious logic puzzle and then some. The game is set inside a computer where things have gone horribly wrong. By guiding your sphere round an often multi-screened level, the premise is to knock special blocks that reveal particular colours.

Somewhere else on the same level are other coloured blocks to match them, so uncover two that are the same and you have a set. Find a different one and everything resets.

As you complete each challenge, more and more obstacles are added to make the game more difficult, frustrating and extremely addictive.

There are strange opponents such as a brick wall that needs to be destroyed by switching a wall-mounted laser on, perilous drops into oblivion and dynamite that must be kept away from once detonated or else it's shattered glass time.

What sets this game apart from the usual crop of PD and commercial software is the intricate design (a word sorely lacking from many titles these days) and slick and professional style. Completing a level is satisfying and the urge to see *Oxyd* through to the end, grows with each victory. Highly recommended.



Roll dat ball but make sure you don't get blown to pieces

Action FEATURE



CONTROLS A REGIMENT OF
WE 14 MOVES LEFT.

desire to see the Glass Buttock shattered once and for all. A little more thought could have been given to the stars featured who could have had different talents to go with their personas.

Despite this, the Glass Buttock of Thorg is a good looking, fun and fast strategy title that is well worth a close inspection.

Twelve celebs hit the road on a quest... a quest to cork the Glass Buttock of Tharg

Rush 2

Available from: Floppyshop

This little gem received a large and well-rounded thumbs up from our games reviewer, Jonathon "The Biff" Moddock when he used to helm the PD pages of this fine magazine. Indeed, there didn't seem to be anyway of dampening his enthusiasm on hearing that I was doing in this round up.

Convinced that his immaculate taste and sharp reviewing skills could not be wrong, I eagerly loaded in Rush 2 to find out what all the fuss was about.

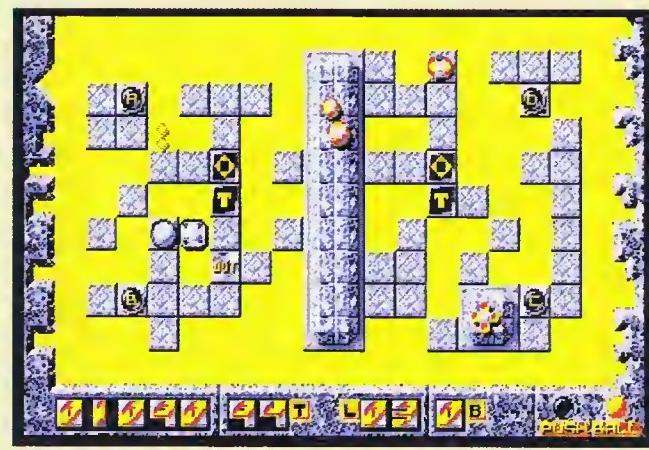
An hour later and I understand his views utterly - Rush 2 is a strangely and fiendishly addictive little number with an emphasis on smart presentation and gameplay that makes many titles look barren in comparison.

On starting the game, the player is presented with a series of squares, some of which are joined, others which are not. Sprinkled liberally on them are a set of letters that need to be collected in alphabetical order.

This is done with what sounds like a complicated method but in fact, is easy to use after the first few tries. You control a ball that rolls happily along the platforms but also at your command is a bat.

This tool pushes single squares around the screen to help the ball get to the more inaccessible areas and cut off areas where the letters are situated.

This is difficult stuff indeed in places but with professionalism and style similar to the classic Oxyd (reviewed elsewhere in this round-up), Rush 2 is a great title that's worth many a moment invested in it to reach the end.



Rush 2 provides some taxing moments for the puzzle punters out there

Shockwave

Available from: New Age PDL

This was one of the first games I reviewed when I started on the Public Sector and now, after seven months, it still packs a hefty playing punch.

Set in deep space where your objective is blow up asteroids and glean their mineral deposits, the title is very much a variant on Asteroids without the gravity problem that resulted in many a death

in the arcade. Obviously, there are numerous factions such as other greedy pirates and nuclear missiles out to put a stop to your wealth-gaining ways and these need to be executed or avoided at all costs.

On amassing a substantial amount of valuables, there's an opportunity at the end of each level to visit the local Arthur Daley of space retail and buy some power-ups for your craft.

Extra lives, better weapons and smart bombs may be bought from the foul-mouthed salesman who boasts as much charisma as Mr Bean.

Graphics are sharp, crisp and very pleasing to the eye, the only disappointment being your ship which looks a little dull in comparison.

Gameplay is of a very high standard - being wiped out on one level makes you more and more determined to try again and avoid that nuclear missile the next time. A fun variation on a theme and a must buy.



Asteroids meets the 90s in this powered-up, zero gravity update - Shockwave

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Tel: 0224 312756

LAPD
80 Lee Lane
Langley
Hearne
DE75 7HN

New Age PDL
PO Box 30
Leigh-on-Sea
SS9 4AD
Tel: 0702 526435

Gremlin have placed all their Lotus games into one box for your delectation.

Jonathan Maddock adjusts his fluffy dice and jumps into the driver's seat

LOTUS TRILOGY

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge was and still is one of my favourite ever games. As far as racers go, you couldn't ask for much more in terms of addiction and gameplay. This arcade-style racing game featured some of the fastest and smoothest graphics ever seen on the ST.

Ever other racer was judged simply by comparison to Gremlin's superb race-'em-up. The ultimate aim of the game was to qualify for the Lotus licence, which was only issued to those who had completed all 32 tracks and finished top of the racers' table at the end of the competition.

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge's outstanding feature was undoubtedly the two-player option. Once selected the screen was split in half (although even in one-player mode you only got half a screen with a rather pointless picture occupying the lower half of the display), one player taking the top of the screen, the other taking the bottom.

Once you'd found a friend to play against, your competitive spirit leapt out of your body like a demon from hell and you'd turn into an instant boy racer.

On each level, the player needed to finish in the top ten drivers in order to qualify for the next race. On the two-player game, if either driver finishes in the top ten, then both racers are carried forward to the next race.

The player's next starting position is determined by his finishing position on the previous race, which will be inverted. For example,

if you finish in first place, you start the next in 20th.

The first Lotus game set a trend by being extremely user-friendly and this trend was followed by the next two releases. There were plenty of options you could change so that they suited your own personal preference.

For instance, you could select between computerised or manual gears. The normal manual gears are much harder to get to grips with, but the acceleration and top speed of the computerised gears are less impressive.

When Lotus was first released there wasn't another racer that came even close to beating it. Nowadays there are a few that have got very close, but for sheer hot racing action Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge can't be beaten!



Fun and frenetic racing fun in two-player mode. Don't forget that it's also a race against time!

Lotus Turbo Challenge 2

Now how do you take a highly acclaimed racing game that had perfect playability and addition and make it better?

Well, it can be done and it was. Apparently Gremlin received bundles of mail from avid gamers saying that Lotus was "brilliant", but they also pointed out some features that they could've included into the game.

Gremlin, a caring kind of software house, took these ideas into consideration and incorporated them into the sequel. The new features included a full-screen single-player

mode, a machine-to-machine link allowing four players to take part in a competition, more cars and oncoming traffic and weather addition like fog and rain have all been incorporated.

The gameplay for the sequel has been changed. Instead of racing against other competitors, you find yourself racing against time. The game is played over a number of stages, eight in total, each one made up of a number of checkpoints which will vary between six and ten depending on the stage.

You must reach the next designated check-

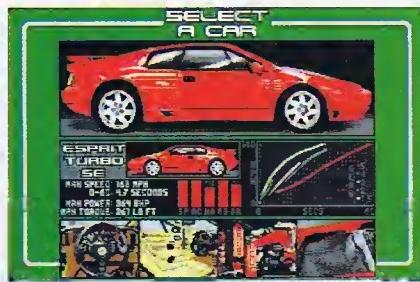
point within the allotted time in order to continue racing. The final objective is to reach the final checkpoint on any stage ahead of your opponents (if you've found a friend to play against) within the given time.

Each stage takes place in a different part of America, and each has a password which allows you to start on that stage in future races. Each stage has its own hazards and dangers which will also determine whether you drive a Lotus Esprit or a Lotus Elan.

The Esprit is a bigger vehicle with a great top speed, but it doesn't handle as well as the less speedy Elan. The eight stages take you through forest, night, fog, snow, desert, city, marsh. Finally you'll face the storm stage.



The sleek Elan is not as fast as the Esprit or the M200, but it handles the twists and turns of the tracks like a dream



The Esprit is thick and, er, chunky. Fast on the straights, but it doesn't handle the corners as well as the other vehicles



This green demon machine will never be put into production. It takes the corners quite well and is very fast. An all-round good vehicle

which is packed full of wild rain, thunder and lightning.

As an actual product Lotus 2 isn't vastly different from the original, but as Lotus Turbo Challenge was so good, this perhaps isn't such a bad thing. The graphics are as good as the original, and the introduction of the new Lotus Elan was a nice touch.

I prefer Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge to this sequel, simply because you had to race against opponents rather than the clock. Despite this little grievance, Lotus 2 is a damn fine racer which will more than satisfy most gamers.



Go! Slam your foot to the floor in the game that revolutionised car racing games on the ST



The Esprit's fast, but handling is tricky

Lotus 3 The Ultimate Challenge

The third and final Lotus game in the series hit your monitor screens in the latter part of 1992. Just when you thought you'd seen the last of those Gremlin car games, Lotus 3 popped up from nowhere, and who did we have to thank for this?

Well, it was you, the games buyer. It was you who once more wrote to Gremlin begging, nay, demanding a third Lotus extravaganza. The Sheffield-based software house combined all the best elements from the first two games and then introduced a wealth of new options.

As well as all the options from the first two Lotus games, Gremlin managed to cram in five new themed levels, each with its own unique graphic style, plus new features that affected the handling of the car, such as gusts of wind.

The game developers also added a third car, the M200. This car never did and never will go into production, so in effect this is the only time you'll ever get to have a go in one. On top of all these features there's a whole host of new music and sound effects and improved graphics to boot.

The most innovative feature is undoubtedly the RECS system which gives you access to a practically infinite number of tracks. Other racers which had a track editor built in didn't quite work as games because it took

so long to design just one track. However with Lotus 3, each track you design will take as little as a minute and you don't even have to save them to disk. How? Every time you design a track you are given a code, which you can write down and then simply just type it in next time you load up Lotus 3. You can even phone up your chums, tell them the code and they can test out your track.

Lotus 3 is, as the title suggests, the ultimate Lotus racer, and this probably because it's a hybrid of the first two games. If you had to choose one out of the three then

this would probably be the one you'd go for. If you've got a ST and haven't got Lotus 3, then I can only tell you to buy it now, because you won't find a better racer.

Conclusion

As a standalone package, the Lotus Trilogy is highly recommended, but only if you don't own a copy of Lotus 3. These Lotus-less people can then get all three racers for a bargain price.

Gamers who obviously had the intelligence to buy Lotus 3 when it first came out might want to save their pennies, but if you want to collect 'em all this is the ideal and probably only opportunity you're going to get.

All in all, Gremlin's three race-'em-ups make for a damn fine racing package.

ACTION GOLD



Ah, the open road, blue skies, warm weather and a good thumping tune blasting out of the stereo. I think I'm in heaven!



Excitement is just around the corner as both cars head towards the checkpoint. Cool!

VISION	★★★★★
AUDIO	★★★★★
DIFFICULTY	★★★★★
LASTABILITY	★★★★★
90%	
Publisher	> Gremlin
Developer	> In-house
Disks	> n/a
Price	> \$29.99
HD Install	> No
Size	> 1 meg

WORK IN PROGRESS

TEAM SELECTION										
PLAYER NAME	H	T	P	S	SH	CR	FT	INFO FOR PLAYER	PRICE	RATING
G PRICE	34	18	6	13	81	92	93	HAGE £125 P. R.	31	93
D WILLIAMS	15	23	10	11	13	93	93	1 YEAR CONTRACT		93
D JONES	32	30	12	16	15	92	96	INSURE: 0 £0		96
D EXSE	26	21	13	14	72	93	96			96
D CLAYTON	6	19	21	14	72	93	93			93
M GRAHAME	6	8	11	21	8	95	95	HANOLING.....34		95
M JONES	2	2	27	13	15	91	91	TACKLING.....18		91
A NEHRMAN	10	12	13	30	82	93	93	PASSING.....8		93
A HIRHAN	3	12	12	26	11	93	93	SHOOTING.....13		93
A HOPE	11	12	26	18	15	93	93	CONTROL.....81		93
A BOUGHES	1	12	19	74	84	93	93	FITNESS.....32		93
G KOOD	1	21	9	1	9	93	93	AGGR. SION.....4		93
S PRIEST	16	1	1	1	8	93	93	HORALE.....1		93
S NETTOU	16	15	16	17	15	93	93	FOOT.....BOTH		93
R BRADSHAM	16	33	19	13	18	73	73	PLAYED.....45		73
R BURKES	5	14	24	13	13	69	69	SCORED.....0		69
R QUED	8	13	24	30	12	33	33	CONCEDED.....33		33
R HEMMINGS	4	9	8	8	16	9	38	OPTS.....0		38
								TRAINING.....		
								HANOLING.....		
								LOK.....		

GK: GOOD ** MF: FAIR ** AT: FAIR ***** TEAM RATING FAIR *****

Here's where some anxious team talks will take place



Premier Manager scored highly, and the crowd loved it. After a while away resting, the sequel, Premier Manager 2 is nearly ready for release, Simon Clays investigates

The all-important confidence level is helped by support from the fans and board

The league table is where the true effect of your decisions will show

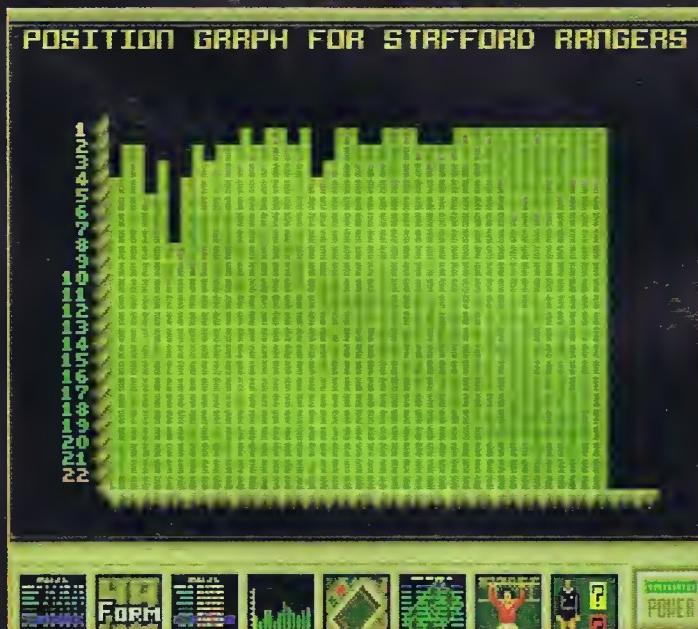
CONFERENCE LEAGUE TABLE										
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2. SCORPIONS RED	42	22	24	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
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The central icon board where every real decision is made

AGER 2

The bar graph will track your progress



invest in is staff. Using the telephone icon, you'll be able to ring up the job centre and find team coaches, a physio, a youth team coach and a talent scout.

Once they're on your staff you'll be able to utilise them in training your players in their weaker attributes (which is quite a few at GM Conference standard), have the physio standing by to attend to any injuries, and send the talent scout out looking for specific types of players you're looking for.

The other way of finding new talent is to examine the transfer market. It'll take a lot of

skill and managerial manipulation to prize a talented young player from a club with more potential.

Once match day approaches you'll want to make these final assessments to your squad and the players within it. Each player will come with a set of attributes that decide

his overall quality. These will range from the player's ability to tackle (out of a 100) down

who's performing like a donkey.

To assess tactics you'll be able to examine the opposition and establish the type of game they'll play, whether they'll get physical and what formation and passing techniques they'll attempt.

Once the game starts, everything apart from tactical changes and substitutions will be out of your hands. The game will be

his ability to control a ball and pass it

Once these player skills are thrown together they will give the overall ability of the team. The levels within the structure of

Premier Manager 2 will vary from The Ultimate — say Brazil circa 1970 — through to fair, through to the Cock and Bull second 11.

Before you enter the arena, home or away, you'll want to select one of the 16 different formations that will be included in the game.

You will also want to adjust the final tunnel. By simply clicking with the

mouse you'll be able to swap your substitutes, strengthen different zones of your team and drop anyone

played out as a combination of commentary and animations that will emanate from a large digital scoreboard (like those used by large clubs to display the score).

After the game, whatever the outcome of the match you'll be able to examine a whole range of different statistics and breakdowns. Whether you want to look at your dismal league performance or at your players individually to determine who were the mules, you'll be able to.

You'll also have the chance to take a look at the league's form teams, the highest scorers and even have a reflective peek at your own, probably dismal form.

Although Premier Manager 2 gives you the opportunity to proceed up through the leagues until you become Premier champions, the chance of doing so without pulling all your hair out and resigning several times

Using the telephone again, you'll be able to talk directly with the club secretary and find out at what level the board's confidence is running at.

It's worth remembering that if things are going particularly badly, you can start applying for another job. Conversely, it's also worth bearing in mind that you yourself may get your marching orders for poor performance.

Premier Manager 2 should emerge towards the beginning of Summer if conversion from the Amiga version continues at the current pace.

Until then you'll all have to start working out some tactical formations and wait for what looks to be a thoroughly engrossing management simulation.

STAFFORD RAMS	2(1)	WREXHAM TOWN	0(0)
AFTER FULL TIME			
17/17 AT MARSTON ROAD			
WEATHER: WINDY & SUNNY			
		REFEREE: O. CODHE	
TOTALS		HOME	AWAY
POSSESSION	TIME	41' 37	48' 23
YELLOW CARDS		1	0
RED CARDS		0	0
PLAYERS INJURED		0	1
SHOTS ATTEMPTED		11	9
SHOTS SAVED		4	8
SHOTS MISSED		5	1
ATTEMPTED TACKLES		99	66
TACKLES WON		32	18
TACKLES LOST		67	48
ATTEMPTED PASSES		132	117
GOOD PASSES		32	59
PASSES INTERCEPTED		39	11
BAD PASSES		61	47

**The telephone is
where deals are
struck**

Struggling to get to grips with armed conflict? Having trouble keeping your shots straight? Well, join the Action team for an in-depth guide around the trenches and battlefields of...



CANNON FODDER



MISSION 3

We'll start with Mission 3 as this is where the game begins to take shape - you'll need to learn how to master the early levels to understand the complexity of the future missions that lie ahead.

Your team of chosen soldiers begin only with their Tommy guns and so must search the areas for extra heavy-duty firepower to destroy the enemy buildings with.

First click on all of the commandos' names to make them bunch together a bit more. By keeping the group tightly packed you'll increase the firepower of your team. Also by using this tactic you'll reduce the chance of trailing soldiers when the grenades are being hurled from the enemy.

As soon as you're ready, make your way to checkpoint number one on the map. Once there, collect the grenades next to the hut then retreat and throw a grenade at the building to destroy it. Be sure to aim for the door as this is the only way to be sure of complete destruction.

Now head for checkpoint number two. From here you should separate one man from the team to go it alone. To do this click on one of the men's names and then click on the banner at the top of the name list. Through this separation you'll increase overall chance of success as one man can travel faster and easier than a whole squad.

Then it's just a case of directing this lone warrior to destinations three to five while collecting the extra case of grenades from location three.

At location four you should be able to hurl a grenade off the building above, which will save the slow and dangerous journey up the slippery slope.

The main key to success is to keep your man moving to avoid the enemy taking lucky shots at you. If you do encounter large groups of the enemy at any point, keep your distance and let them come to you as their weaponry has slightly less range than yours.





MISSION 4, PHASE 1

Moving back into the jungle, your mission is to destroy all enemy buildings - only. You may of course kill the enemy on sight but for ease, conflict is to be kept to a minimum.

Assemble your squad as in the previous mission by bunching them together and then take them to location one, marked on the intelligence map that is provided.

Once your squad has reached its first destination, wait until the two enemy soldiers on the other side of the river spot your team. As they carelessly wade into the river, use your machine guns to eliminate them.

With the two guards now disposed of you can begin your assault on the hut at checkpoint number two. Move the team in quietly and grab the case of grenades that lie beside the hut, then retreat and lob the newly-acquired grenades at the shed.

Be sure to retreat a fair distance as the roof has a nasty habit of chasing your men. With the first target destroyed you're ready to move on to point number three. The journey down will be dogged with soldiers hiding in the trees; be sure to move with caution as they appear from nowhere.

After destroying building number three, swim over to hut number four. There'll be some more grenades to acquire so be sparing with your guns.

Then it's another case of moving with stealth to the last hut at location number five. There'll be big soldiers hiding in the surrounding forest, so keep your eyes peeled.



MISSION 4, PHASE 2

This is quite an easy mission once you've sorted out what you've got to do. It's also possible to complete the tasks with just one soldier. So from the start point dispatch one of your team members, then send him down to location one.

There'll be a few hidden surprises to encounter here so stay at the brow of the hill and keep yourself alert as the soldiers rush in to attack. If things get a little too heated for your liking, withdraw the way you came, while firing.

With this sector secured you can move into area number two. In this opening you'll see a foxhole from which scores of enemy soldiers will rush out to attack.

To deal with this problem, keep your gunsights trained at the hole itself. This will slow down the enemy until they decide not to send any more men out for a while.

You can now move out to the village at area three. In this small community of natives there'll be more enemy presence, and more importantly extra grenade ammunition.

Once you're satisfied that all buildings have been neutralised and you have your fresh supply of ammo, you can leave for location four.

There will be a few patrols roaming around this area so move in slowly with controlled bursts of fire. With the enemy eliminated you can cross the river to collect the case of grenades if you need to.

Further down the map is the last building. As you approach, two guards will attack from the bridge. Try to use your grenades from maximum distance as the hut will also be providing the guards with extra support. This is because it unleashes its content of enemy soldiers.

With all the buildings destroyed it's a case of searching the map for any surviving soldiers. You'll more than likely find them hanging around location two where the foxhole is.

MISSION 4, PHASE 3

Four easy steps to undertake in this phase. First, send one man out again for maximum efficiency and speed. Order the soldier to move to the first location. In this small clearing there'll be a few soldiers, a case of grenades and a booby trap near the quicksand.

With the soldiers killed and the grenades recovered you can tackle the mine of the swamp. To disarm it safely shoot at it from a distance. You'll know if you have been successful in this operation because there will be a large explosion.

Moving onward to area two you'll encounter more enemy patrols. There are not many soldiers to kill but they're quite quick and precise with their weapons, so take things easy.

As you journey further down the map try to keep central, as this way you'll see only enemies from a fair distance, thus giving you an advantage.

When destination three has been reached you'll see another small group of soldiers waiting in the river. It is most important that they are disposed of before the final assault at location four.

Attacking this building is harder than it first appears. Several squads of enemy soldiers have been spread around it which provides the hut with plenty of cover. Combat this problem by killing the north-western group first.

Then leg it down to the southern section, kill the guards and throw a grenade at the hut to stop any more soldiers rushing out. With the two major groups of guards and the hut secured you can use the trees to help you polish off the rest of the platoon. Just keep behind the trees and let the enemy walk into your line of fire.



CANNON FODDER cheat code



MISSION 5, PHASE 2

Staying in the freezing weather, your commanding officers have seen fit to destroy a couple of installations using you and your men.

Your starting position is at the top of a cliff. Below can be seen two huts; one of them is active with a legion of enemy troops.

To the west of point number one is another hut with a boozooka guard keeping lookout. Take one man to point one and destroy the building and any enemy encountered.

Then, descending cliff face and move your unit to point two to annihilate the active structure. You shouldn't encounter many enemies here so there shouldn't be any problem. To the south of area three are another couple of buildings; both are fully operational and so must be destroyed.

However, don't make haste with this job until you have successfully retrieved all of the rocket ammo next to the southernmost hut.

With the first two operations completed, you should head for the boozooka guard at point four – and as long as you are travelling at full speed you shouldn't have any difficulty disposing of this lone soldier. The same applies for point five – another boozooka guard threatens your mission but he's not alone.

Surrounding the small island are several enemy commandos, and they too must be eliminated, but not before the boozooka guard, as he can wipe you out from a distance.

With this eastern side of the map nicely secured and free of enemy presence you may concentrate on the western side. Begin with point six, next to the foxhole is another rocket launching soldier – it's best to approach from the south as he won't see you there.

Then as you get out of the freezing waters, let him have it with a rocket before moving in with the machine gun to mop up any survivors.

Further to the west of location seven is an over-populated barracks guarded by – wait for it – a boozooka operator! Always try to neutralise the rocket soldier first before attacking the barracks itself.

Moving swiftly to point eight you face more adversaries in the form of three boozooka patrol men. Use your remaining rocket to kill the one on the ground and the ones situated at the top of the cliff.

If the phase doesn't end after killing the last man, search the mid areas of the map for soldiers. Sometimes the foxhole lets a few more soldiers out to give you some grief.

That's all the killing we can stomach for this month, but, join us next month for another instalment of gratuitous violence.

MISSION 5, PHASE 1

Headquarters have sent the troops back into the frozen wastelands. This time it's going to be more difficult than ever. The enemy are tightening up their security by deploying soldiers with long range boozookas.

To increase the chance of surviving the mission, be sure to deploy only one man. There's no way that you could take the whole group and expect them to survive with the dangers that lie ahead. As you begin you'll be straight into conflict with an enemy patrolman.

Use the whole group to kill him then sort out who's going to do this phase alone. Once you have made your selection move him down towards hut number one on the map. Destroy the building and kill all enemy on sight before retreating back across the river.

Now that you're back on the other side of the river you can approach the next two huts at location two. Be sure to grab all of the spare ammo around the huts before going bonkers with your weaponry. With these structures destroyed you can once again retreat and cross the river.

The next target is at location three. There are some grenades here but they shouldn't be needed, so you can use your machine gun to make them explode.

In doing this the explosion will cause the hut to explode leaving only one building in this sector. Be sure to keep your distance from the snowman; he tends to get excited and blows up, killing all that happens to be nearby.

Beyond the trees are three guards, all of whom are equipped with boozookas. You can use the boozookas you have to kill them, but you may as well get used to killing them with your machine gun at his stage, because in the later levels you'll notice that there won't be enough ammo to waste on these geeks.

Just keep running towards a boozooka guard and fire when you think you're close enough. If done correctly there's no way the enemy can hit you with a 120mm shell.



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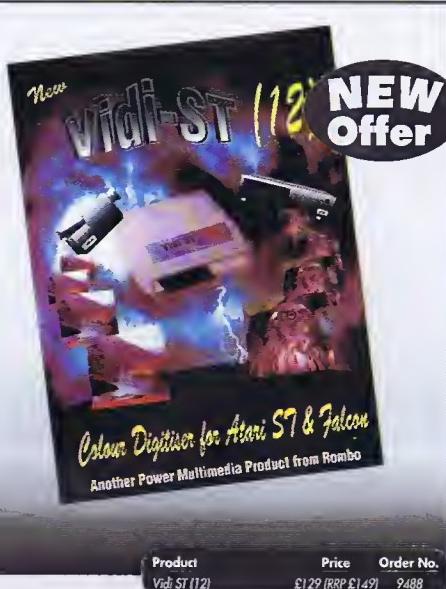
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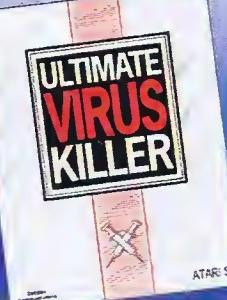
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recording and editing program within the videomaster software. The Videomaster system also features a video sequencer.

The complete package contains the Videomaster video digitising and sound sampling hardware unit, TRI-Colour filters for colour camera use, comprehensive user guide and full system software.

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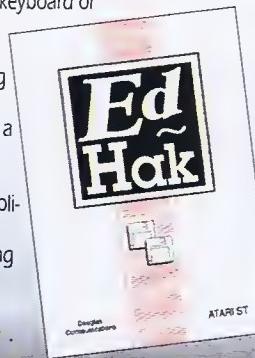
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HARDWARE - The 16 bit sampling unit plugs into the cartridge port of the ST. Audio connections to and from the sampler are provided via standard Phono connectors. An Input volume control is also provided.

SOFTWARE - EDITOR - The sample editor is a highly flexible 'WIMP' style program which allows conversion or editing between any AVR format 8/12/16 bit, Mono or Stereo samples. Sampling rates of up to 48Khz can be used, but the program can resynthesise samples to practically any other speed.

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AUTOLOOP [Zero Crossing] detection is also incorporated to ease loop point editing.

The system runs on any ST or STE with 502K [1Mb min is recommended], and comes complete with hardware, software and comprehensive manual.



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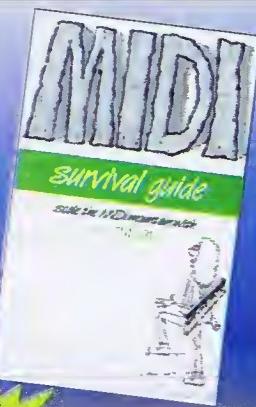


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STU MAY

They get stranger by the day, don't they? Company names, that is. Hmm... Software may have an odd 'un but the company have a very down to earth product. Chapman's Handy Chord Reckoner is a simple piece of software which will name and play chords.

It will analyse any reasonably harmonious combination of between two and five notes. You enter notes by clicking on an on-screen keyboard or by playing them in from an attached Midi keyboard. To get the program to name the chord you click the right mouse button or press Enter.

There are ten memory boxes for storing chords for recall later on, and there are ten memory banks. The program plays the chords via Midi when they are recalled. You can save a bank to disk but this overwrites any previously-saved chords.

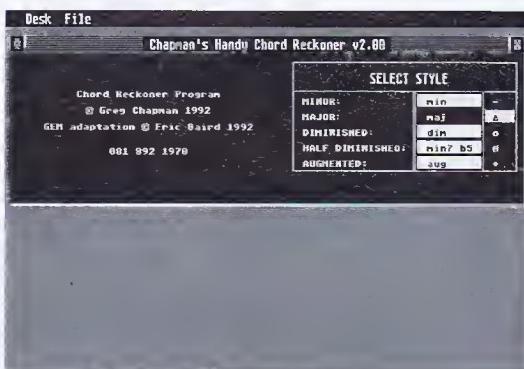
It is possible to customise the way the chords names are displayed – to use American notation, for example. Several parameters can only be accessed from the key-



Chapman's Handy Chord Reckoner shows and plays most armonious combinations of notes

board. Given the rather minimal nature of the program, I wouldn't have thought total mouse control was too difficult to implement. The only menu is the one which says Quit. But the program is very easy to use.

A desk accessory version is also supplied but the documentation warns that some programs will seize any incoming Midi data for themselves so you may have to



You can select English or American chord abbreviations

input notes with the mouse.

Who would use it? Well, if your chord theory is a little shaky, it could help you there and you could use the chord banks to try out chord sequences when writing songs. Other than that, well, Hmm...

• Chapman's Handy Chard Reckoner costs £14.95 from Hmm... Software, 19 Kenley Raad, St. Margarets, Twickenham TW1 1JT. Tel: 081-892 1970.

The

Ian Waugh discovers a program that'll tell you whether that weird and wonderful combination of notes you just played is actually a chord

program they were written for. As many files are produced on other types of computer, this ain't easy.

And then I discovered MMM – Midi Music Maker. Actually, I sort of rediscovered it because it has been around for a while. It stirred my interest again when I found some interesting but otherwise unplayable music files tucked away on a BBS.

To be honest, the program is a bit of a pain. When it loads it insists on playing Mozart's Rondo Alla Turca and the interface is a bit clunky. It made my ST hang a few times, too, but it does the job which is to read and play 13 different music file types. For the insatiably curious, these are:

Music Studio/Studia 88 (ST)
Music Construction Set (ST)

Painful music

On my trawl through the shareware libraries and bulletin boards, I find lots of music files in several file formats.

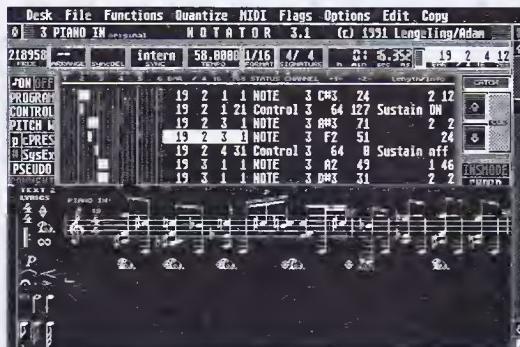
The trouble is, you usually can't play them unless you have the

Three of the best to solve your common problems

Two more disks of Midi files landed on my desk from Station Records. Classic Ivories contains seven Chopin piano pieces in Midi file formats 0 and 1.

Since there's only seven, we might as well list them – the Raindrop Prelude plus Preludes in A major, C minor, E minor and B minor; the Polonaise in A and the Waltz in D flat popularly known as the Minute Waltz (it actually takes a minute and a half to play!).

The pieces were recorded live and then quantised slightly so the results would look good in a score editor – which they do. The only slight disappointment is that the right and left hands are merged onto



Chopin's Rainbow Prelude which you'll find on the Classic Ivories disk

one track so you can't print them out as a proper piano score, not without manually dividing the tracks, and budding pianists can't practise one hand at a time.

Station Records are the company responsible for the Midi Busker disks – collections of guitar riffs recorded with a Midi guitar which you can cut, copy, paste and transpose into your songs when you need an authentic guitar part and John Williams is busy with another album.

There are ten styles including Bossa Nova, Samba, Farruca, Guajira, Gypsy Rumba and Milonga. No, I'm not familiar with all these, either, but I do like a bit of Latin (so do I! – Ed) and these riffs are terrific. The pat-



Latin Busker contains lots of hot and sultry chords played on Midi guitar by a hot and sultry guitarist so you can drop them into your songs and pretend you've had guitar lessons

lost chord

EZ-Track (single track) (ST)
 SID Player Music (Commodore 64/128)
 Master Composer (Commodore 64/128)
 Advanced Music System I and II (8-bit Atari)
 Antic Music System (8-bit Atari)
 MIDI Music System (8-bit Atari)
 Orchestra 85/90 (Colour Computer)
 Lyra 1 and 2 (Colour Computer)
 Adlib (PC)
 Cakewalk (PC)
 Standard Midi Files, formats 0 and 1 (all computers)

Well, perhaps there's aren't too many Commodore 64 or 8-bit Atari files languishing on your favourite BBS, but you never know what your great uncle might leave you in his will.

Anyway, MMM will load the song files, let you alter the presets,

analyse the music, compress the velocity, and do all manner of things you probably never imagined you'd want to do to a Midi file.

You can also play files through the ST's speakers. Or try to. Some files work better than others – the less parts the better and forget drums – but it did a fair job with some instrumental files I tried.

PLAY AND EDIT

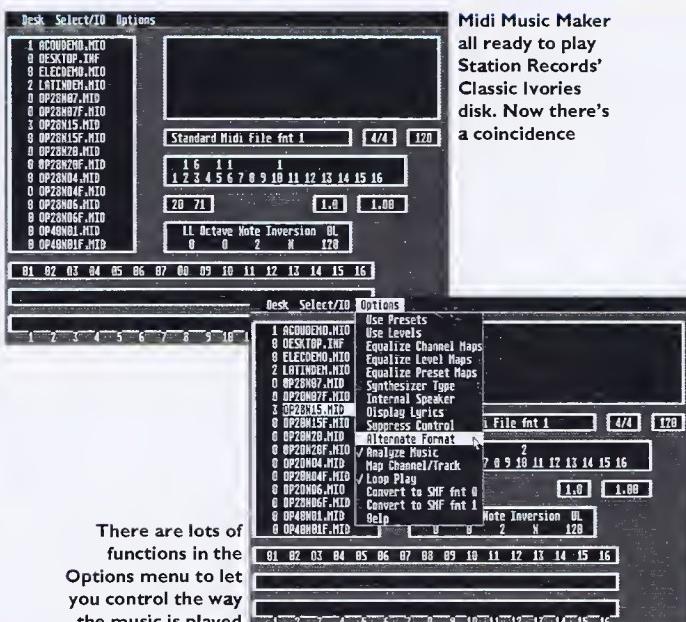
Most interesting, however, is its ability to convert these file types into Standard Midi files format 0 or 1 so you can play them and edit them in a more standard sequencer.

The program runs in colour or mono and there is an unbelievably helpful on-disk manual – which

terms contain more than 16 tracks so if you only have a 16-track sequencer you could lose a few.

The files are mapped to GM and there is an extensive Read Me file on disk (you can have a printed copy for another £1) which explains exactly what the files are and how to use them. If you want a flavour of what the tracks could do for you, listen to the demo file – it's superb!

• *Classic Ivories* is £9.95 and *Latin Busker* is £14.95. More from Station Records, Station Road, Sudbury CO10 6SS. Tel: 0787 311500.



There are lots of functions in the Options menu to let you control the way the music is played

you'll need to read to discover all the program's nooks and crannies. If you want to do the decent thing, the shareware registration fee is \$10. So if you like trawling the board's for music

files, here's the program to play them. I found my copy on disk MID3352 from Floppyshop, 45 Provost Graham Avenue, Hazlehead, Aberdeen AB1 8HB. Tel: 0224 312756.

Music update

• More on Fractal Music Composer which we squeezed into the news last month. The price is likely to be £79, not £89 as suggested, and to update from the first version will cost about £35 although for a limited period you might get it even cheaper.

Contact Hugh McDowell who is the man behind the program (he of cellist fame with ELO). He is now selling the software direct, not through Fractal Music who handled the first version.

We'll be looking at the new version very soon. If you can't wait, a demo disk will cost you £7 (you get £5 back if you buy the full version) which does just about everything except save. More from Hugh at 29A Mulkern Road, London N19 3HQ. Tel: 071-272 7482.

• Music bulletin boards seem to be catching on. Following the Akai and Hands On BBSes comes Proline Midi Music. After registration and revelation of your credit card credentials, you can log on and download any of the company's massive range of Midi files.

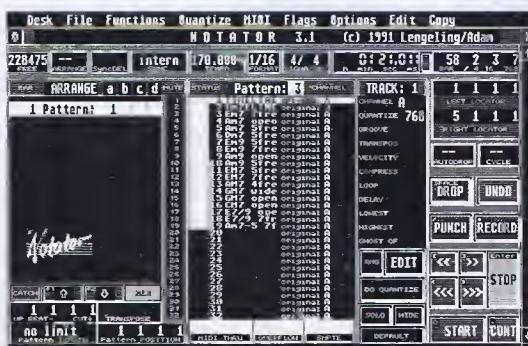
The Board also has shareware, hardware support, classified ads and several other areas. You can log on as a visitor and look around for free. Call 0602 641176 or to talk to a human try 0602 633117.

• Steinberg have released AudioSpector for the Falcon. It's a real-time spectrum analyser which combines an analytical display and a professional measuring instrument for analogue and digital audio. If you want you spectrums analysing, contact Harman Audio on 081-207 5050.

• Labyrinth have been at the video camera again and produced a new set of reels for Emagic's Notator Logic. The video, along with a setup disk containing the music data used in the video, will form part of a new Notator Logic pack.

It's a getting started video hosted by Tim Walter who did the Notator video we reviewed here last year, and it runs for almost an hour and a half. Two more videos covering advanced functions are already in preparation. For more information contact Labyrinth on 0282 835800.

• Finally, this is definitely the last plug for MEMS (the Midi and Electronic Music Show) which takes place 22 to 24 April at Wembley. News just in reveals that Compo will be running demos of the Falcon's direct-to-disk recording software. For more details contact the organisers, Westminster Exhibitions, on 0222 512128.



The notes in Latin Busker look like block chords but if you examine the event list you can see they have been carefully plucked and strummed

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Once upon a time, when Bobby Robson was England football manager and Margaret Thatcher prime minister, the home computer revolution started in Britain with the ZX Spectrum.

Like its less successful predecessor, the ZX81, the Spectrum was made

Can you dig it?

by Clive Sinclair, everyone's favourite bespectacled boffin figure, later to be knighted. Although he was forced to sell out to Amstrad, the Spectrum was a real breakthrough: 48k RAM, 16 colours, built-in Basic interpreter and innovative mass storage devices called Microdrives which were much faster at loading and saving than ordinary tape recorders.

Hooked up to an ordinary television, the Spectrum introduced a generation of Britons to the wonders of programming, games and word processing. The Spectrum wiped the floor with the many weird and wonderful contraptions posing as the opposition at the time and was without doubt the home computer of the early 80s.

OVERTAKEN

For more serious purposes, it was eventually overtaken by Sinclair's own QL, CP/M machines such as the Amstrad CPC and PCW, and of course the Atari ST, IBM-compatibles and the Apple Mac. But as a games platform, it held its own for quite a few more years and even today you cannot but admire the programming and design skills that managed to tease out so much pleasure from, by today's standards, so little computing power. The Spectrum was based

Archaeology can be fun – at least on computers, as Günter Minnerup discovered when the TT met the ZX Spectrum

guage into the other. Hence the irony that even the much superior ST technology cannot emulate the ancient Spectrum without serious loss of speed – precise figures are hard to give because it depends so much on the program being executed – and it takes a TT with its 32MHz 68030

on an 8-bit Z80 chip running at 3.5MHz with a screen resolution of 256 x 192. For me, at least, many of the games of the Spectrum era remain infinitely more playable and addictive than most of today's blockbusters.

If you don't believe me, you now have a chance to test this for yourself even if there isn't a real Spectrum gathering dust in your loft or bedroom cupboard. All you have to do is obtain a copy of ZX_SP207, a truly wonderful Spectrum emulator.

It is public domain and therefore freely available from PD libraries and bulletin boards – I got mine from CIX, although at over 500k archived length a fast modem is strongly recommended.

To fully appreciate what Christian Gandler, the emulator's Austrian author, has achieved, you need to understand that the Z80 and the chip inside your Atari, the Motorola 68000, are entirely different beasts altogether, so every single instruction needs to be translated from one machine lan-

guage into the other. Hence the irony that even the much superior ST technology cannot emulate the ancient Spectrum without serious loss of speed – precise figures are hard to give because it depends so much on the program being executed – and it takes a TT with its 32MHz 68030

and a large hard disk to rev the emulator up to full original Spectrum performance!

The emulation itself, however, is as complete as it could be given the considerable hardware differ-

ences. Even the notorious Microdrives are emulated as hard disk or floppy files, as are ordinary tapes. Using the Interface-F1 emulation, serial port data can be redirected to the Atari Centronics printer port. The emulator runs in either ST Low or High modes, the latter assigning 16 levels of grey to the Spectrum colours.

For those of you with a real Spectrum and a collection of Sinclair software, it is possible to transfer this to the emulator via the serial port, although copy-protected games could pose problems. The emulator, however, comes with a sizeable selection of Spectrum classics already included.

Strictly speaking, of course, this is a bit dodgy from the copyright point of view as indeed is the inclusion of a Spectrum ROM file, but since the machine has not been sold for some time now I cannot believe Amstrad's Alan Sugar, who now owns the rights to the Spectrum, will get terribly agitated over it.

Myself, I have never used a Sinclair computer before but I'm hooked on this impressive little toy.

On the right path

As Atari ST users, we lead a fairly sheltered computing life. The friendly GEM graphical user interface shields us from most of the unpleasantries of the operating system, offering easily comprehensible pictorial and menu-driven options at each turn.

Get a PC emulator and that quiet life is rudely interrupted by the DOS command prompt staring at you, expecting you to enter obscure command abbreviations and all too often responding with even obscurer error messages.

Unaccustomed as we are to speaking to an operating system directly, we often go on unnecessary detours where DOS actually provided useful short-cuts. One example of this is navigation around a complex hierarchical filing system, especially on hard drives. DOS programs tend to create even more folders – oops, directories – than Atari software and it is easy to lose track of where you are and where you need to go next.

Once in some applications' sub-directories, you will often need to execute a DOS command located in the system files directory. This is made much easier with the PATH command which makes DOS remember where to look for any files that cannot be found in your current directory.

If, for example, you add the following line to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file:

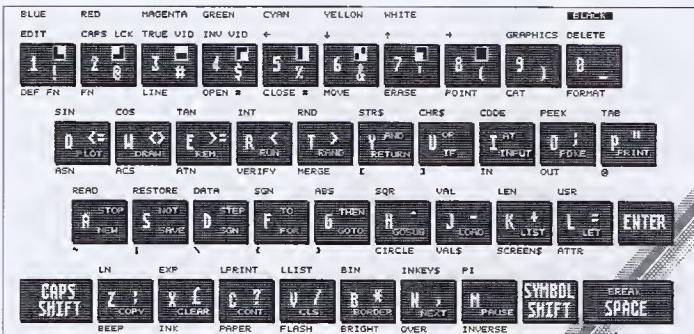
```
PATH C:\DOS; C:\WORD; D:\SPREAD
```

then DOS will automatically search the above directories in that order, allowing you to access DOS commands, your word processor and your spreadsheet from anywhere in your system.

A similar service is performed by the APPEND command for data files. Put the following into AUTOEXEC.BAT:

```
APPEND D:\TXT; E:\PS
```

and all your text and PostScript output files will be available to all your applications by simply entering the file name as a parameter. With both commands, the semicolon between the path specifications is crucial. Enter the command alone, followed by a semicolon, and the previous path definitions will be cancelled.



The original Spectrum keyboard in its full glory – almost all the key-words and functions are fully emulated on the Atari keyboard, although this can be confusing initially without previous ZX experience. Printing this image out for reference certainly helps

ST ACTION BACK ISSUES

These days ST Action is incorporated into Atari ST User. However, if you missed any of the original issues and their great CoverDisks, when ST Action existed in its own right, here's your chance to buy them. But hurry - stocks are limited.

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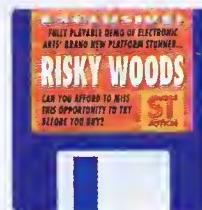
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ON THE DISK: Fast food, Easter eggstravaganza, plus; issue 2 of STA's disk mag, Freestyle!



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The accessible Internet

Over the past few months, the staff at electronic conferencing system CIX (Compu-link Information eXchange) have been doing some sterling work in making their Internet services more accessible to their less Unix-minded users.

There are countless wonderful facilities available on the worldwide Internet, but the most commonly used, apart from electronic mail, are the Usenet conferencing system and the file transfer facilities (FTP).

Both of these have received considerable attention at CIX recently, resulting in much easier online use, and also operation via simple comms scripts for automation by Offline Reader (OLR) software.

The latter is especially useful for those who prefer not to hang around online for too long, watching the BT cash-clock tick relentlessly onward.

USER-FRIENDLY

Over a year ago, CIX introduced new Usenet message reading software to replace their old read-only Usenet gateway. The software was based on the Unix trn program, which is about as user-friendly to computing novices as being asked to hand-code all their software in machine code.

Equally, this system was decidedly hostile to any kind of automation by an offline reader, so CIX staffer and Atari ST enthusiast Dave Johnson set to work to create a much simpler command-driven system which would allow rapid filing of messages for downloading and reading offline.

The Newsget gateway now offers a simple set of commands, designed mainly for offline readers but equally applicable to online use if required.

To round up all your unread newsgroup messages and download them as one file, you just need to go into the Usenet gateway – go newsnet – and issue two commands; batch all endbatch to file the messages, and then download messages to transfer them to your ST for reading.

There are also join and resign commands to update the list of newsgroups to which you are subscribed, and a show new command which lists the number of unread messages in each of your news-

André Willey waxes on ways to gain easier access to this most useful of networks

groups. The other Internet tool which I mentioned was the file transfer system. This is a powerful and incredibly useful facility, and it's a crying shame that so many potential users are frightened away by the rumour that the interface is complex and time-consuming.

Enter another CIX staffer with a mission, Matthew Sims, who has devised a series of simple commands to allow you to search the Internet for files that you require, and then fetch and download them.

Matthew hasn't actually invented anything new – the utilities he has written act as front-ends for more complex online systems which already exist – but he has streamlined and simplified the process to a level that beginners should be able to comprehend.

After issuing the go Internet command to get into CIX's Internet gateway, the first thing you'll need to do is find where the files in which you are interested can be found.

Internet has its own interactive

facility for doing this, known as Archie, and CIX makes use of this. For example, if you wanted to find all the sites around the world which hold Atari-related files, you would issue the command archie Atari.

If you already know the filename that you want, but not where it is stored, just ask Archie to find it – archie gemview would search the network for any filenames which contain the text "gemview", for example.

Rather than displaying the results on-screen – which could take some time for extensive searches – Archie will create a text file containing the information you require.

This can be downloaded to your own computer by using the file download command, fdl archie.lis. You can then logoff from the system and examine the file at your leisure.

Once you've decided the specific file, or files, that you require, go back online and into the Internet

system again. To specify the file, you'll need to tell the batch FTP system the name of the site which contains the file, and the directory and filename that you want.

For example, to access a file info.txt, in the directory /pub/computers/atari/ at the site ftp.uu.net, you would type the command:

```
batchftp ftp.uu.net /pub/computers/atari/info.txt
```

This is carried out by CIX as a background task, which means that once you've issued the command you can logoff – or continue with other online work, if you prefer – while CIX searches out the files from around the world for you. You can issue any number of batchftp commands, which will be processed in turn.

DOWNLOAD

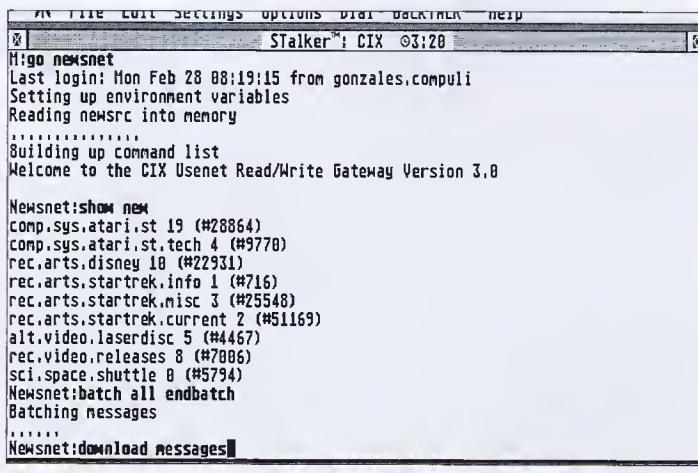
After giving the system half an hour or so to fetch the files, you can go back online to download them. You could use the fdl command as before, but it's much simpler to let the batch FTP system do everything for you with the command batchftp get.

This will download all the files that have been received, using your favourite file transfer system – Zmodem is recommended.

All of these operations are just as easily handled by an offline reader, allowing you to do most of the work before you log on to CIX, and then letting the OLR software issue all the commands quickly and efficiently.

If you are using the latest versions of the Cixread offline reader, Usenet messages can now be displayed just like ordinary CIX conferences messages, allowing you to comment or reply to them in the normal way. Cixread will handle all of the technical details, so you can just get on with enjoying the service.

- CIX contact details: 081-390 8446 (voice) or 081-390 1255 (modem)



Using CIX's Newsnet gateway to file unread newsgroup messages and download them to your ST

Get the power...

...to become a computer games master in our PowerPlay video competition



15 videos to be won

The PowerPlay video, presented by Dominic Diamond, reveals the wealth of crucial skills and techniques which led to Danny Curley becoming the former UK and European games playing champion. Danny is now a product evaluator for a company involved in developing new games. He tests them, identifies faults and suggests improvements.

The strategic techniques outlined in PowerPlay work across all the various games formats and are applicable to players of varying abilities. Techniques covered include strategic skills, joystick control, screen positioning and weapon use. Entering this competition could enable you to drastically improve your scores, without having to resort to cheating!

To enter, all you have to do is send your answers to the questions below on a postcard to PowerPlay competition, Atari ST User, Europress Direct, PO Box 2, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EA. The closing date is April 29.

Q1: What is Danny's job?

Q2: Name two of the techniques covered in the video

Tie-breaker (in no more than 20 words): I need help with my games playing because...

Result information may be obtained by writing to our offices. No cash alternative to other prize is available. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

PLEASE STATE CLEARLY IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO RECEIVE PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL FROM OTHER COMPANIES

Flying the flag

The first thing to do when designing a masthead is to ensure that it fits your chosen grid (see accompanying panel). Look at a handful of newsletters and you'll see that most of them have mastheads of either a quarter or a fifth of the size of the page, and this is a good rule to follow – at least until you become more adventurous.

As the masthead is the first thing anyone will look at, it has to do three important things. It has to attract attention, it has to identify itself and it has to convey its purpose.

Your job is to ensure that it does all three but you might well be limited in the components you can use. Firstly, you may be doing a company or other organisation's newsletter, in which case you'll invariably have to include the corporate logo – or

An effective masthead

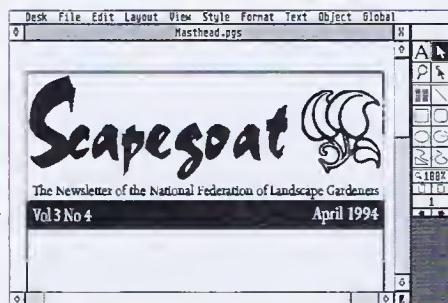
can greatly increase
the impact of your
newsletter. Here

Andrew Wright
continues his practical
guide to getting it
just right

omnimark if you're feeling really pretentious.

Secondly, you may have to use a corporate typeface, which can be even more restrictive, believe me. Thirdly, some bright spark will

The masthead
with everything –
note the logo,
subtitle, date and
volume
information



have had a brilliant idea for the name of the publication. It will invariably be utterly tasteless but as it's usually the managing director who dreamed it up, you'll be on thin ice if you try to change it.

With all these points considered, you are at last free to be as artistic as your software, your time and your talent allow. However, time spent with pen and paper will seldom be wasted, so doodle away

until the idea starts to take shape. Once you have a paper design, think about which bits will need to be done in a graphics package and which can be done in the DTP software. Be careful with tints – if you're photocopying the newsletter, anything up to 30 per cent can look faint or patchy while heavier tints in excess of about 70 per cent will inevitably smudge unless you use a really top end copier.

You will already know whether colour is in your budget but there is one cheap way of adding colour that not everyone thinks of. If you are producing the newsletter weekly or monthly and there are likely to be a good number of issues, you could have the masthead pre-printed in two or more colours, either on A3 paper (for folding to A4) or single A4. Do it in bulk and it isn't likely to be expensive.

CONTRASTING

When designing the main components of the masthead, consider the following points. Do you need a subtitle, perhaps to explain the purpose of the newsletter? If so, does it need a contrasting typeface? Does one word need to be more prominent, perhaps in upper case or heavier type?

How big or obvious should the logo be? Can it be integrated into the name? Is there a good visual pun you can use to grab attention and at the same time convey purpose? The most common is where one letter is replaced by a similar graphic relating to the topic.

- More next month – if you've designed a good masthead why not send it in? There'll be freebies for the best – not to mention honourable mention in these pages!

On the grid

Select a grid that's appropriate to the newsletter you're designing. If there are likely to be lots of graphics your grid should be able to cope with three to four to a page.

If not, it should be flexible enough to handle various different arrangements of text such as boxes, panels and so on. Try to incorporate reasonable margins – there's nothing worse than trying to hold a photocopied sheet that leaves ink on your hands!

White space is vital too which is one reason for the increasing popularity of non-uniform grids. I particularly like the three column grids where one of the outside columns is thinner than the others. It can be kept blank if there's lots of text, or used for small graphics, captions and boxes.

Single column grids give a kind of "newsy" appearance, particularly if

used with a monospaced typeface that looks as if it's hot off the press. This can be very useful for a weekly newsletter.

Two column grids are still popular. They have a classical simplicity that conveys a staid, authoritative content but the layout can be boring (though quick and easy to lay out).

Three or four columns is far and away the most popular design and the reasons are obvious once you start using them. The text doesn't have to be too small, plenty of variation is possible and the whole look of the publication is of a mini-newspaper, which, after all, is exactly what a newsletter is supposed to be.

A three-column layout – one of the most popular grids



There are shareware fonts out there by the bucket-load so if you're looking for inspiration, why not order a few disks' worth from your favourite PD library or get online and join CIX or CompuServe, where there are vast repositories of the things?

This month's example is an unusual font that could go down well in many designs such as those for sports club newsletters (a digital stopwatch?) or video clubs. Called Diodes Light, it comes as a shareware Postscript Type 1 font and is well worth tracking down.



Diodes Light could be useful – or so I'm LED to believe...

IT
OF
THE MONTH

Wether your business is doing well or struggling, the appliance of some of the techniques discussed below, using the power of your ST or Falcon and peripherals for much of the donkey work, can bring improved results.

The really wonderful thing about marketing is that, although the rewards can be great, the marketing operation does not have to be costly.

Marketing can be divided into two main areas: market research, the kind you do when starting a business or launching a new product and which is concerned with the market you are selling to; and product or sales marketing, which includes pricing and promotion (some experts call the former "market research" and the latter "marketing research"). Firstly, let's take a look at market research.

MAGAZINES

Research studies on a variety of trades are carried out by organisations like Key Note and Mintel. Their reports are available at larger public libraries. Trade magazines and trade shows are also excellent sources of information.

The first step as far as local research is concerned is establishing how many similar businesses there are in sufficiently close proximity to affect your local market.

Speaking to people in the same business in a different part of your region, and to the sales representatives of the firms who will be supplying you with your business materials and day-to-day needs, can reveal much about the trade in your area.

Be perfectly clear about whether you are selling to the trade or to the end users of your product.

Trade customers expect credit of anything from a week to 30 days,

sometimes as much as 90 days – whereas private customers will generally pay immediately or do their own deal with a finance company, unless you plan to be a credit broker as well.

When researching trade customers, list the firms that may be interested in your product or service. Local and national trade directories, newspaper and magazine advertisements and Yellow Pages can be helpful.

Find out the views of these companies on what you propose to provide them with. Send them samples or provide a free sample service if possible, and you will also need to be specific about pricing.

Use your database, word processor and other relevant software to their fullest extent. Be prepared to attend meetings with potential trade customers whenever and wherever you are invited.

If you are dealing with the general public, establishing who is likely to buy what from you may be more difficult. Speak to people already in the business whose customers are likely to be similar to your own.

A well-designed questionnaire (use your DTP package if you have one, or a good word processor) can be an effective and relatively cheap way of gauging the public's requirements or their receptiveness to a new idea.

Try out your competitors' products and services where possible, and obtain pamphlets, sales literature and price lists. If you can, talk to competitors' customers, but don't put them under any pressure.

Remember that limited companies must file annual accounts and returns, to which the public has access for a small fee. Details of

companies registered in England and Wales are available by post from Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff CF4 3UZ, phone 0222 388588, or by visiting Companies House, 55-71 City Road, London EC1, phone 071-253 9393.

For companies registered in Scotland, details can be obtained by post or by calling at Companies House, 100-102 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 3DJ, phone 031-225 5774.

If the companies are in Northern Ireland, contact Companies Registry, IDB House, 64 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4JX, phone 0232 234488. Use your database to keep all your competi-

be cheap. If you can't afford a stand, try attending shows as an individual, finding out what you can from others and floating your own ideas when you find the right people, even showing them your products if they are not too large to take along with you – but be careful not to offend the organisers or people who have taken space at the show.

Other tests you can do on your own include mailshots – write personalised letters to potential customers asking them to indicate their interest in your product or service. Provide them with a form and pre-paid or stamped envelopes for their replies.

Or you could try leaflets. These

No matter how small your business, effective marketing is essential if you are to reach anything like full sales potential, explains Richard Williams

Market+

tors on file, making sure you have sufficient fields to keep all relevant information about them.

Knowledge of the public's reaction to your products, services or your ideas of what they should be is essential.

Trade shows and exhibitions are obvious opportunities, but taking a stand at one of these is unlikely to

should be simple, straight to the point and easy to understand. You can distribute them as loose inserts in magazines or newspapers (your chosen publication's advertising department will provide full details), post them through letterboxes yourself or leave them in places where you know people in your target market congregate.

Picking the right tools for the job

One piece of hardware you will definitely need apart from your computer is a printer. The advice for those involved in marketing is: Go for the best you can afford.

Basically, there are four types of printer you can consider. Dot matrix printers generally produce the lowest quality. While it's not strictly true to say they have no place in marketing operations, if you plan, for instance, to produce your own leaflets, mailshots and questionnaires, you will most likely want a higher standard of output than most dot matrixes can provide.

Although inkjets are capable of higher quality than dot matrixes, the cheaper ones in particular may produce results of insufficient quality in many marketing contexts.

However, the likes of Canon's new BJC600, offering full colour printing at £500 or less, represent incredible value. The results are not far below laser quality.

Laser printers are best if you need high resolution printing – but in mono only unless you've just had a substantial windfall. Very closely allied

to lasers are the new LED printers. These feature a strip of microscopic light emitting diodes, rather than the laser's single light beam and mirrors, to produce excellent results.

Anyone planning a marketing campaign and using an ST or Falcon to help save time and effort will need a minimum of a word processor and, for storing vital information, a database.

A word processor with its own integral mail merge facility so that you can print the same letter, form or questionnaire, but with each copy personalised for hundreds, even thousands, of different people, is the kind to go for, unless you find one which works in conjunction with a database you already have or plan to by to achieve the same results.

On the database side, don't forget that a relational database, as opposed to the flat file type, can show you information from several "linked" files simultaneously, with fairly obvious advantages.

A spreadsheet, preferably with charting facility, will prove very useful for number-crunching the results of any surveys you do, working out likely market shares, and dozens of other tasks.

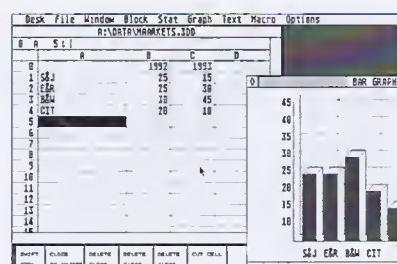
And of course there's advertising. There's nothing wrong with advertising your product, even if it's not quite available yet, in order to gauge the public response.

If you state that people should return a form or write to your business address (or telephone) for more information, you are not saying that the product is available, but you will still get some idea of the response, and many of those who reply may become customers if you proceed to production.

Sample products are often taken or sent to the trade before full production commences. You can try them out on private customers, too.

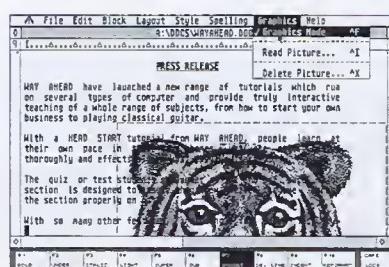
Researching the present size of the market and judging whether your entry into it will grow the market are the first two steps towards predicting your market share.

A number of organisations produce pocket books and reports listing current market shares for most kinds of industry, the Marketing Pocket Book produced



Using Microdeal's 3D Calc spreadsheet to work out market shares

Use a good quality word processor to produce your press releases. With First Word Plus, for instance, it's easy to include graphics as well



customers from competitors requires a product with an excellent unique selling point, a very competitive price, exceptionally high quality, a brilliant advertising campaign, or any combination of

people you can provide with your service in a month or whatever period is appropriate, include your best estimate of your share.

And so to the sales marketing – second major area. The priorities here must be to get your pricing right, and to locate and impress your potential customers.

If you manufacture a product, the selling price should be the cost of raw materials per unit plus (total overheads divided by total unit production) plus mark-up plus VAT. The latter is only included if you are VAT-registered.

Don't forget to include labour costs in total overheads, even if you are the only person involved in the business. Individuals should base their labour costs on what an employee doing the same work would cost.

OVERHEADS

Wholesalers or retailers should add together net cost, mark-up, overheads associated with the item and, where appropriate, VAT.

Pricing of a service is normally based on labour rates and the number of people and time it takes to provide the service, plus material costs, overheads and, of course, the mark-up.

Remember, if a product's price works out at, say, £3.03, the sales edge you will achieve by charging £2.99 may well pay for the 4p price reduction, although you should always be careful when squeezing margins.

On the other hand, if the price comes out at £3.85, the psychological difference between that and £3.99 is quite possibly so insignificant that you may as well add on the extra 14p provided your competitors are not all charging around £3.50 for something similar, in which case you may need to

reduce costs in order to undercut them.

It all depends on the quality of your product and the public's perception of it, the state of the market and the level of competition.

Mark-up in all cases needs to be sufficient to provide you with reasonable drawings from the business and to provide for future investment, but not so great that the price of your product becomes uncompetitive.

Armed with a good product/service and a sensible price, you now need to find customers. How you establish a good customer base varies from one kind of business to another, but lucky is the business person who can afford to sit and wait for customers to beat a path to their door.

In some cases – and particularly for mail order businesses – a research or database agency may be of great help, but you will have to pay, of course. ACORN (A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods) is probably the best known of the neighbourhood classification systems.

TARGET AREAS

This identifies 30 neighbourhood types – from agricultural areas to private flats occupied by older single people – and was developed by CACI Market Analysis.

Other systems include PIN (Pinpoint Identified Neighbourhoods) and MOSAIC, by Pinpoint Systems and CCN Systems Ltd respectively. Any of the systems should enable you to target areas – on a local, regional or national basis – where direct mail, catalogues and advertising leaflets are most likely to succeed.

In addition, the Royal Mail has developed CLS, a system which analyses buying, reading and viewing habits using neighbourhood classification systems and data from other major audits and surveys.

Alternatively, you can buy mailing lists from a variety of sources. For instance, groups with particular interests are often served by particular magazines, many of which will sell you their subscription lists.

Useful contacts

NTC Publications.....0491 574671
A range of books containing valuable market statistics.

Chartered Institute of Marketing0628 524922
For information on marketing courses and guides.

forces

annually by NTC Publications being one excellent example.

Properly conducted market research will leave you in no doubt as to whether you are likely to grow the market, or need to win customers from your competitors.

Do bear in mind that, even to grow an extremely buoyant market, your product will have to be of good quality and represent reasonable value for money. To steal

those things, possibly including all four.

With the results of your detailed market research gathered in, use your spreadsheet's charting facility to make graphs, showing the size of your market and your competitors' current shares.

Having researched public or trade perception of your product or service, knowing how much you can produce or how many

The Really Interesting Survey
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Configuring it out

In the March issue I mentioned the Falcon's reluctance to work with that excellent little utility Fastcopy Pro (or Fastcopy's reluctance to work with the Falcon, depending on your point of view, I suppose).

Within a few days of the issue hitting the streets, I had a letter from Michael Wilson of Delny, Invergordon, with an ingenious answer to the problem which he asked me to share with other Falcon users.

Mr Wilson noticed that if the Falcon was booted from the Fastcopy Pro master floppy (or a backup copy), the utility worked perfectly, copying high density disks just as it should.

Suspecting that the DESKTOP.INF file present on the disk contained some information that Fastcopy needed, he copied it to the Falcon's root drive, renamed it to NEWDESK.INF (having backed up the original NEWDESK.INF file) and when he rebooted, Fastcopy Pro again worked fine.

Unfortunately, other programs didn't – there's a lot more information in NEWDESK.INF than in DESKTOP.INF, some of it obviously vital to the smooth running of some programs.

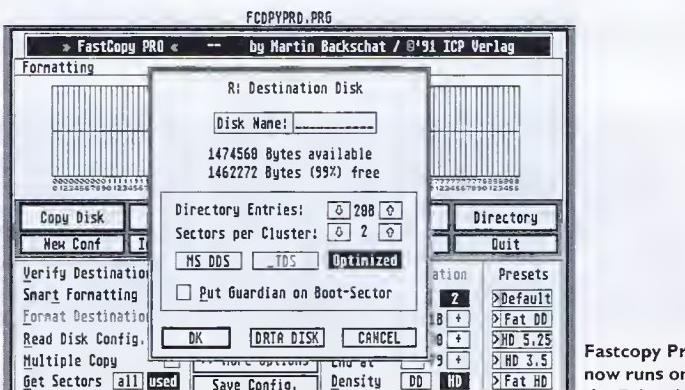
The answer is to boot with the disguised copy of DESKTOP.INF,

With some help from a reader, John Hetherington gets Fastcopy up and running again and finds a novel configuration accessory

save the desktop so that the other additional information is saved properly and then rename that file something like FASTCOPY.INF.

Whenever you need to run Fastcopy Pro, go to the Options menu and read in FASTCOPY.INF using the Read .INF File... option. When you're finished, read the normal NEWDESK.INF file back

again and everything works as before. Clearly there's something in the DESKTOP.INF file that makes Fastcopy Pro work. I had heard it was something to do with the CPU cache but I haven't been able to confirm it. Can anyone spot what it is? Anyway, thanks are due to Mr Wilson for his help – I'm extremely happy to be able to use Fastcopy Pro again!



Just for a change, this month's PD offering comes not from Germany but from France. FALCONSX is shareware and will cost you 50F (around £6) to register but it offers dozens of configuration options for setting the Falcon's onboard hardware and non-volatile RAM.

FALCONSX is a desk accessory with options that include CPU and blitter clock speeds (switchable between 8 and 16MHz), the bus type (Falcon or STE bus), CPU cache on or off, video sweep frequency (50 or 78MHz), sound volume, sound connections and turning the internal IDE drive on or off.

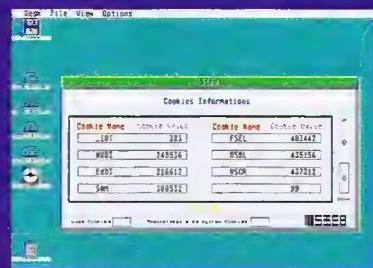
Incidentally the author's documentation states that Fastcopy Pro works correctly with the cache switched off but this doesn't seem to be the case on my system. The plot thickens...

The latter can be handy if you have an external SCSI drive, for example, while there's an equally handy facility for obtaining information when the machine crashes. The information in the registers, stack values and crash vector are all saved and will even survive a reset, so programmers can track down any problems.

The accessory should also appeal to those involved in sound recording and Midi as there are plenty of options for altering the volume, balance and connections as well as resetting the sound system if necessary. FALCONSX should be filtering into PD libraries right now.



FALCONSX, a very useful desk accessory to have around with dozens of options



You can even put your fingers in the cookie jar!

ICD clearly now

The latest version of the ICD Pro set of utilities, very popular with Falcon owners with external SCSI drives, has an interesting new facility. Version 6.2.4 of the driver software now supports trap handling.

Trap handlers allow the loading of AUTO folder programs, desk accessories and a DESKTOP.INF or NEWDESK.INF only from the selected boot partition.

Previously only the AUTO folder programs could be run from other partitions, whereas the accessories and INF files were always loaded from drive C.

This meant that if an accessory bombed when attempting to load, the computer would go into an endless auto-booting loop. The only way out was to boot from a floppy while bypassing the hard drive with the Alternate key, run the AHDI driver from the floppy disk and remove the offending accessory.

BOOTING UP

With the new ICD driver, any partition can be selected "on the fly" when booting up, making it easy to get out of these awkward situations. It also means you can load different sets of programs and accessories from different partitions – although I'd strongly recommend boot managers like XBoot as being a more practical solution to that problem.

The ICD Pro set's most important feature is that it can be used with any SCSI hard drive whether it has an ICD host adaptor or not, as well as non-SCSI devices like the older MFM/RLL drives and more esoteric ones like CD-ROM drives and Flopticals.

This includes the Falcon's internal IDE drive which is given the SCSI ID 16. The Pro set of utilities also includes the full version of ICD Cleanup, a very useful and often necessary defragmenting utility, and a SCSI direct command utility.

The ICD utilities are available from Ladbroke Computing on 0772 203166 and cost £39.99.

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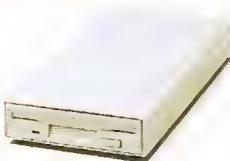
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